



UK'S FASTEST GROWING WOMEN'S MONTHLY - TRY US!

MAY 2010
£2.70

essentials

Great value!
ONLY £2.70

**68 little changes
big results!**

...for your home,
your looks, your
life - no effort!

UNDER £30!

**FAB FASHION
TO TEMPT YOU!**

**New skincare
miracles** to make
you look amazing

**100 ways
to save
100
calories**

32 PAGE
MAGAZINE
**Make it
easy!**
Inside...



**FAMILY DINNERS
FAST & FABULOUS**

**CHILLAX! AT HOME
WITH FRIENDS**



**PLUS...
35 NEW RECIPES!**



**BEST ONLINE
VALUE HOLIDAYS**



**KIDS' PARTIES
LOW-COST &
STRESS-FREE**

FREE!

Long-lasting eyeshadow
worth £8.50



VIE
at home

4 wearable colours
- choose your fave!

**SAVE
MONEY...**

**£20
OFF**

very.co.uk



when you spend £40

YES!
Make your
dream
body a
reality
this year



(+p&p)

WORLDWIDE
N1
ANTI-WRINKLE PROGRAMME*



REVITALIFT®
DAY CREAM

ANTI-WRINKLE + FIRMING
ADVANCED FORMULA WITH PRO-RETINOL A + ELASTIN

Smooths the skin: 76% agree* + Skin feels firmer: 71% agree*
Reduces the appearance of wrinkles.

Unless you want a permanent lift, there's always Revitalift.

*Consumer test, 243 women

Because you're worth it
L'ORÉAL
PARIS



Act your shoe size not your age...

I still can't quite believe that I'm really, definitely, no kidding myself, 44 years old. How can I be when I still change into 'play' clothes after I get in from work; when the whole series' of *Glee* and *Gossip Girl* are on my TV planner; when school days seem a few years ago, not decades; and when the idea of saving seems sensible for when I'm a proper grown-up?

Most of my friends act exactly the same as they did 20 odd years ago, whether they're mums or not. We're still staying up too late, drinking a bit too much, doing silly faddy diets, giggling hysterically at stupid things, and spending Saturdays at the shops buying a new outfit for the big evening out (what's changed with that though, sadly, is having to do the weekly food shop at the same time, rather than getting a cheap and smelly kebab on the way home late at night!).

When I remember my mum's friends and colleagues when they were the same

age as I am now, they just seemed so mature and, well, old. There were distinct ways in which you were meant to behave and dress – my mum, thank goodness, was different, with one blouse button too many undone, the skyscraper wedges, and the funky hairdo. But the neighbours were always tut-tutting and muttering about when would she ever grow up and act her age. Now, though, those attitudes have gone and our feature *Middle age... What's that?* [page 30] celebrates the blurring of those generational lines. So if you're feeling a little bit past your sell-by date, read and be inspired – and see you in Top Shop later!

What I'm so pleased about is that it's readers like them and you who are making *essentials* the success story it is. Your positivity and real approach to life that we reflect in these pages has helped us to celebrate another big circulation

increase – so a big thank you from all the team as we're now officially Britain's fastest-growing women's fashion and lifestyle monthly.

So, what's your secret to feeling or looking younger than you are? Mine, I think, will be getting the art editor to do a bit of Photoshop on my Ed's letter pic! Let me know at the address on p11 or talk to us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/essentials_mag. Until next month...

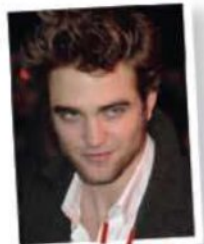
Jules

Jules Barton-Breck, Editor

9 things that should always be good to do whatever your age...

- 1 Showing off your best bits – legs, boobs – go for it!
- 2 Lusting after just-post-pubescent eye-candy. The delicious R-Patz anyone?
- 3 People-watching with a friend and being really, really bitchy.
- 4 Eating cold curry or Chinese leftovers – straight from the fridge.
- 5 Dancing round the lounge [make sure the kids are out].
- 6 Kissing in public – what is it with hating PDAs? It's lovely and romantic.
- 7 Buying something just for you, for no reason.
- 8 Wearing a killer pair of heels – it's what taxis are for.
- 9 Feeling good about who you are, all the time.

TWEET US! What brings out the girly in you? www.twitter.com/essentials_mag



No excuses not to treat yourself!

★ **FREE EYESHADOW WORTH £8.50**
We love *Vie at Home* and are thrilled to offer you a fabulous long-lasting eyeshadow. See page 137 for details.

★ **IT'S ALL UNDER £30!**
Once again we've scoured the high street stores and websites to bring you the best fashion buys at the most amazing prices. Enjoy!

★ **SAVE ££££**
Very.co.uk is one of our fave websites – made even better because this month, for first-time buyers, you'll get £20 off when you spend £40.



essentials 3



A real deal not to be missed

Not only can you get *essentials* for the stonkingly bargainous price of £19.99 for 12 issues, this month's offer comes with a free gift of seven brilliant St Ives skincare products.

A buy-one-get-one-free deal that's too good to ignore. And if you're still humming and haaaing about a friend's present then why not treat her, too?

Amazing value!
See p96

L' O R É A L
PARIS

5 problems, 1 solution.

Full Restore 5
your hair.

NEW
ELVIVE

FULL RESTORE 5

The conditioning formula targets 5 top UK hair problems*. Hair feels stronger, weightless, with a healthy-looking shine.

1

Weak

2

Limp

3

Lifeless

4

Dull

5

Straw-like

Cheryl Cole

Styled with some natural hair extensions, cared for with Full Restore 5.

*L'Oréal survey, 2983 UK women.



Because you're worth it

L'ORÉAL
PARIS

May essentials

ON THE COVER

- 14** Under £30! Fab fashion to tempt you!
- 48** New skincare miracles to make you look amazing
- 58** 100 ways to save 100 calories
- 66** Yes! Make your dream body a reality this year
- 72** 68 little changes, big results! For your home, your looks, your life – no effort!
- 136** Save money... £20 off at Very.co.uk
- 137** Free! Long-lasting eyeshadow worth £8.50 from Vie at home

Fashion shopping - under £30

- 14** The new look prints Get set for summer in our eye-popping lovelies
- 20** Yes please! 60 ways to wow for instant glamour
- 25** 1 tunic 4 ways Your star buy this season
- 27** Grab one today! Fab new bags – you can't resist
- 29** Fashion fixers New trends and clever tips

Real-life

- 10** All about you Your news, views and ideas
- 30** Middle age... what's that? Three readers say 'youth' is all about your frame of mind
- 35** I packed a bag & left my old life What makes a woman walk out on her family – and never come back?
- 38** Living our dream Your nightmare might just be another woman's happy-ever-after!
- 41** What I'd say to the 21-year-old me Would you do things differently if you got a second chance?
- 72** SPECIAL! Little changes, big results! Make your life so much simpler with minimal effort
- 91** Your top tips Save time, money and stress!
- 146** My life's little essentials Actress Gina McKee

Hair & beauty inspiration

- 44** Simple ways to look more gorgeous Just a few little tweaks and you'll look miles better
- 48** Bye-bye tired looks... Amazing skin boosters
- 51** What's worth it? Best bargain and luxe buys
- 53** Beauty secrets New tricks and buys this month
- 68** Let's all go on... a spa break! Join us at Ragdale Hall or Champneys Forest Mere



20

This'll set off your favourite outfit a treat

27

Here comes summer – time for a new bag!

14

Feeling bright and breezy? You'll love the bold new prints



44

Yes, you can look even more fabulous!

LITTLE CHANGES = BIG RESULTS

PAGE 72

Just what you need to get everything sorted – from outdoors to your looks!



WIN & SAVE WITH essentials

29 WIN! Stylish silver locket necklaces

51 WIN! Max Factor lipglosses

86 SAVE! Cordless Steam Iron + free Press Wizard, just £19.97

95 SAVE! Ice cream maker for £12.95

132 SAVE! Money off fabulous holiday homes

136 SAVE! £20 off when you shop at Very.co.uk

137 FREE! Vie at home eyeshadow, worth £8.50

138 WIN! A seven-night luxe holiday to Lanzarote



139 WIN! Gorgeous goodies worth £1,000

140 WIN! Fab prizes: Amazing 'experience' days, brilliant getaways, Sony TV and DVD player, plus the latest DVDs

141 WIN! Our lucky crossword winner will be off on a two-night city break worth over £200



32 PAGE
MAGAZINE
**Make it
easy!**
Inside...



TRUST US!
Created for
you in the
essentials
kitchen

Wow! Tastes fab
and it's simple, too



54

Looking
forward to
a brighter
future

Your health

54 The secret we need to start talking about

Four readers on coping with mental illness

58 100 amazingly easy ways to save 100 calories And no, you don't have to starve yourself

62 Your body quirks – what do they mean?

We get to the bottom of that odd behaviour

65 A home test cured all my aches One reader reveals how an allergy test changed her life

66 Turn your body fantasy into a reality

Easy shape-ups and can-do advice

69 10 natural remedies that really work

71 Health updates All the latest news

Home & food ideas

78 For a money-saving make-over go secondhand A cheap, chic new look for your home

89 10 mini DIY tricks Go from drab to fab!

93 What's new in store... Foodie buys to try

95 Food bites Know-how, news and our taste test

Consumer know-how

83 The smart woman's guide to yard sales

84 Check it out Expert help & money-saving tips

Holidays

132 Holiday homes to fall in love with...

From luxe apartments to romantic castles

In every issue

3 From the Editor **9** Treat yourself!

87 Your sneak preview of next month

131 Where to shop **145** Horoscopes



78

It's shoestring chic
– and it's beautiful!

EASY FOOD FOR EVERY OCCASION

100 ON THE COVER

Chillax! At home with friends for a relaxing bank holiday feast

105 Lazy weekend all-day brunch – you won't spend long in the kitchen, but you will eat well!

109 Light & lovely apricot roulade – whip up a wow-factor pud!

111 ON THE COVER

Family dinners – fast & fabulous... and they'll be new favourites, too

116 Cook once, eat twice! Turn spiced lamb into two fab meals

117 New skills! Cook perfect scones... from sweet and savoury to a quick and clever pizza idea

121 Best in season... broad beans PLUS samphire, new potatoes, watercress, radishes, strawberries

YOU & YOUR HOME

123 What to sow & grow right now... you only need a few pots or a small plot in the garden

125 ON THE COVER

Kids' party guide – they're low-cost and stress-free

127 Turn memories into a work of art – modern craft ideas to make stunning displays

129 ON THE COVER

Best online value holidays – check out these websites and save money



OLAY

"I have swapped to
7 age-defying effects
in *1 cream*"

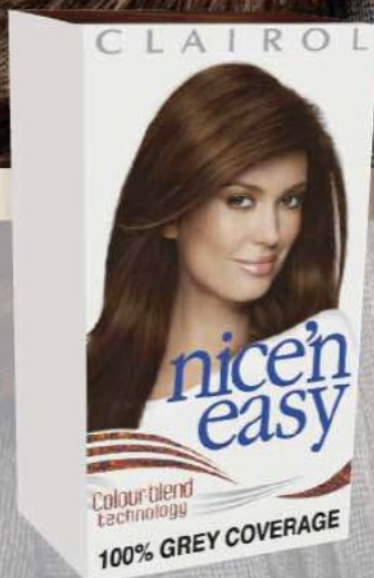
Maudie Newton



Love the skin you're in™ **total effects**

CLAIROL®

BE A SHADE BRAVER



A small change to your hair that's creating a big stir in hair colouring.

95% OF USERS SURVEYED WOULD RECOMMEND IT FOR BEAUTIFUL NATURAL LOOKING COLOUR.

*In an independent survey of 200 people who tried nice'n easy. June 2009.

Find more at www.clairol.co.uk

new this month



Make filing more bearable with these practical but pretty mini pegs. Pink flower pegs, £3.95 for 24, Dotcomgiftshop.



Brush away all evidence of pasty winter skin with a dusting of flattering bronzer. Bronze Goddess Exotic Bronzing Blush, £26, Estée Lauder.



Gorgeous on the dining table, by your bedside or anywhere that could do with a decorative flourish. Number candle vases, £30 for three, Cox & Cox.

Yes, we know it's only a cushion, but doesn't it make you want to sip Pimm's on a sunny afternoon – or is it just us...? Day at the Races cushion, £28, John Lewis.



Get your garden looking alfresco-ready with these summery lanterns. Paper lanterns, £9.98 for three, B&Q.

Treat yourself!

Peachy buys for (two!) extra long weekends in May

It might be that you like nothing more than a nice cup of tea when you have time to yourself, so get yourself an extra-special cup and saucer. Cuckoo teacup and saucer, £30, Wedgwood.



Well, if you have to-do lists to write, you may as well scribble them in something stylish. Set of mini Moleskine Notebooks, £4.40 for two, Oliver Bonas.



We never thought we'd covet a pair of wellies – and then we saw these... Floral print wellies, £35, Joules (sizes 3–8).



This new fragrance is all about New York, which reminds us – the second *Sex and the City* movie is out 28 May. Woo-hoo! Love from New York by DKNY Eau de Parfum, £29 for 48ml, The Perfume Shop.



If you're really determined to grow your own veg this year, start sowing seeds now – this cute kit's just right for beginners. Potting Shed Sow 'n' Grow set, £8.95, Spotty Button.

All about you... these pages are for you

Give me a break!

Rachel Eggleton, 39, works in advertising and lives in Marlow, Buckinghamshire.

WHY I DESERVE A DOVE SPA DAY

RACHEL SAYS: 'I enjoy my job, but I've always loved fashion and for the past three years I've been studying for a degree in fashion and textiles. It was a slog, working in the day and studying at night, but I've finally graduated and think I deserve a break!'

When I was a child, I wanted to be...

...a fashion designer. I've always loved drawing and creating designs.

If I won the Lotto tonight, the first thing I would buy is...

...a holiday for me and my friends. I've had the same three best friends since school and I'd love to treat them to a trip.

My life would be simpler if...

...I was on time. I always seem to be running late however hard I try not to!

The happiest day of my life was...

...my graduation day. It was a really great day for my family and me.

The best part of my body is...

...my legs, because I'm tall (5ft 9in) and often get complimented on them.

I feel beautiful when...

...I get all dressed up to go out. I'm a typical girl and love dresses, high heels and handbags.

I am content when...

...I'm reading or painting. I'm addicted to the *Twilight* series – it's pure escapism – and I've always found painting really relaxing.

I couldn't live without...

...Green & Black's chocolate.

My best-ever holiday was...

...Barbados. I was lucky enough to go a few years ago and fell in love with the place.

If I had one more day to live, I'd eat...

...roast chicken with all the trimmings.

The last time I cried was...

...watching *The Kite Runner*. I'd read the book, but the story of the friendship between two boys growing up in Afghanistan is so emotional it had me in tears all over again.

My favourite book/TV show/film/smell is...

...*A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini/*Gavin & Stacey*/*Forrest Gump*/fresh coffee.

The best thing anyone ever said to me was...

...'you're going to be an auntie'. I have a niece and two nephews – Charlotte, Daniel and Oliver.

The superhuman power I'd like to have is...

...mind-reading. I'm inquisitive (or nosy depending on how you look at it!), so I'd love to know what people are thinking.



She deserves it!

Rachel and her friend Caroline spent a lovely relaxing day at the Dove Spa in London. She says: 'We enjoyed every minute from start to finish. We learnt loads about our skin, fell asleep during our facials, and then got to take a whole bag of products home, too!'

Tell us all about you...

If you'd like a special treat, email us at essentials_feedback@ipcmedia.com, along with a recent photo, explaining why you deserve it.

Dove Spa wants to make women feel more beautiful every day by inspiring them to take great care of themselves. In a welcoming salon environment, it offers a wide range of professional treatments tailored to each guest at affordable prices. To find your nearest spa, visit dovespa.co.uk.



WIN with essentials

We pay £30 for every STAR LETTER ★ we publish, so get in touch today at All About You, essentials, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU, or email essentials_feedback@ipcmedia.com.

Sun's out! Get busy with our garden tips

◆ After signing on the dotted line for your allotment, befriend your elderly neighbours – they know everything.

Jane Purdue, Edinburgh

★ STAR LETTER

Always give your plants a second chance. I was convinced I'd killed my beautiful grape vine, but I left it in a shady corner of the garden for one more season and hey presto – now it covers my whole house!

Margaret Gaskin, London

◆ When gardening in summer make sure you either cover your top half completely or wear something that doesn't leave dreadful tan lines. I learnt this the hard way quite early on in my gardening career!

Julia Summerfield, Cornwall

◆ Instead of scrubbing to get rid of annoying algae on my patio, I just sprinkle it with washing soda and wait for rain (never too long in Yorkshire!)

Lesley Urwin, East Yorkshire

◆ Buy anti-rust gardening tools. Then, if you accidentally leave them outside for days on end (yes, stupid but possible) they'll be good as new when you go back to them.

Barbara Meader, Surrey



Girls' get-together

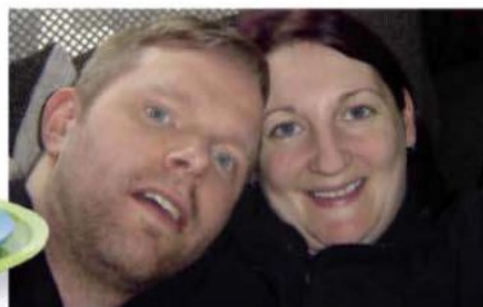
I joined Dudley Ladies' Running Club late last year to get back in shape after the birth of my second son. I was so nervous as I'd never run in my life. But three months later, here I am (second from left) having finished a 10km run with my three lovely friends (on my left, Karen, Sue and Sue). Bring on the Wolverhampton half-marathon later this year!

Samantha Burton, 41, West Midlands



COUPLES CONFESS

Georgina Matthews, 32, and Ferry van der Vorst, 33, live in Surrey and have been together for eight years.



Ferry

- ◆ I love the fact you're so organised, but sometimes I wish we could leave things to chance – it can be more fun that way.
- ◆ I worry that all our plates are going to break when you stack the dishwasher, can you let me do it from now on?
- ◆ You don't need to apologise every time we have an argument – after all, I'm not *always* right!

Georgina

- ◆ It winds me up when you take things too literally – if I ask you where you are, please don't say 'in the car'!
- ◆ When you clean the bathroom, I secretly do it again afterwards, because it's never quite as sparkly as I want it.
- ◆ I've been waiting years for you to pop the question... so when are you going to ask me?!



Will he, won't he? Ferry can discuss it with Georgina over a glass or two as they've won a case each of Via Vecchio Pinot Grigio, a stylish, light, fresh white wine from Italy. Its ripe apple aromas and flavours of sweet pears and citrus fruits are great with chicken, seafood and light pasta dishes, but it's just as delicious on its own. Available from Asda, £6.10.



All about you...

THE essentials BOOKCLUB



Zara White, 37, from Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex, reviews one of the latest releases.

Blueeyedboy
by Joanne Harris
(£18.99, Doubleday)

'This story is of a dysfunctional family; a widow and her three sons – one of whom is a serial killer. It's not at all what I was expecting from the author of the romantic foodie tale, *Chocolat*. The story's told entirely by blogs and mostly from the viewpoint of the murderer, but you never know if what he reveals is true or not. I found it dark, creepy and unsettling, but I desperately wanted to find out what happened.'

FANCY REVIEWING A BOOK?
Just get in touch by email at essentials_feedback@ipcmedia.com.

OVER TO YOU...

It's never too late to start...

◆ **...SLOW-COOKING.** I've recently discovered how much time it can save and how tasty new signature dishes can be. I'm never going back!

Miki Berenji, 42, London

◆ **...FLOSSING.** My dentist was always on at me about it, so I started two years ago and now I'm absolutely obsessed – I can't leave the

house in the morning without doing it.

Debbie Jones, 38, Cardiff

◆ **...STICKING TO MY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION.** Just because I haven't managed to try a new recipe every week yet doesn't mean I have to give up on it now.

Jane Moore, 51, Surrey

STAR LETTER ★

...LEARNING WITH YOUR KIDS. I've just started having piano lessons with my 12-year-old daughter and we're both really loving it – though she does tell me off for not practising!

Lesley Cotton, 48, Derbyshire

◆ **WHAT ABOUT THIS...** Experts are now telling us that heels may actually be better for our feet than trainers. We love our stilettos but we couldn't live in them, could you? We'd love to know what you think for our 'Topic That's Got You Talking' – send your thoughts to essentials_feedback@ipcmedia.com.

We've found our winning man...

and we're sending him and his wife on a romantic break in the New Forest!

partner
of the
year

Aaron Castley, 31, is our Partner of the Year! Aaron stood out for his selfless care and support of wife Crystal, 31, who has ME, and their 4-year-old son Daniel.

Aaron discovered Crystal had nominated him when he took her to the doctor's. 'All the staff in the surgery stood up to cheer!' says Crystal. 'He was very embarrassed, but when I told him we'd won he couldn't stop smiling, we're chuffed we have such a treat to look forward to.'

We're sending Aaron and Crystal on a two-night stay at stunning Rhinefield House*, a member of the exclusive Hand Picked Hotels. They'll enjoy English breakfast each morning and a three-course dinner in the award-winning restaurant.

* For full details visit handpickedhotels.co.uk.

◆ **HOW TO WIN IN 2011** Tell us why your man's the best and it could be you! Our winning couple get a romantic break on us, so send his photo to essentials_feedback@ipcmedia.com.



STAR LETTER ★

Things I want to do before I'm... 40

Helen Thomson, 32, Surrey.

✓ **BUY MY OWN HOUSE**

It's one of the biggest steps I'll take in my life and now I have two young sons, I'm eager to have a home to call my own.

✓ **STOP PASSING MY BAD HABITS ON TO MY KIDS**

If I can get them to school on time just once in a while, it'll be a miracle.

✓ **BECOME A HOUSEHOLD NAME**

I run an eco party supplies company (Eco My Party) and I'm working hard to get our products in all supermarkets!

◆ What are the three things on your list before your next decade? Email us at essentials_feedback@ipcmedia.com.



FEATURE: FIONA GALLEY & ENJOLI LUSTON. ALL CONTRIBUTIONS TO ESSENTIALS MUST BE ORIGINAL & NOT DUPLICATED TO OTHER PUBLICATIONS. THE EDITOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO SHORTEN OR MODIFY ANY MATERIAL SUBMITTED. IPC MEDIA & ITS ASSOCIATED COMPANIES RESERVE THE RIGHT TO REUSE ANY SUBMISSION SENT TO ESSENTIALS MAGAZINE IN ANY FORMAT OR MEDIUM.

NEW

STYLE A NEW YOU EVERY DAY.
With wellaflex SILVIKRIN Heat Creations.

The new formula from
the Wella experts
ensures you get the best out
of heat styling tools
while protecting your hair.



Smarten up with a hit of black

Tame a crazy print with simple separates in classic black. This full skirt looks ultra-chic worn with a sleeveless jacket and heels for smart days, but would look just as good dressed down with a skinny black T-shirt and flats.

Sleeveless **jacket**, £16, 8-20, Tu at Sainsbury's. **Skirt**, £29.99, 14-32, Simply Be. **Earrings**, £8 for six pairs, Dorothy Perkins. **Cuff**, £15, Wallis. **Clutch**, £20, Debenhams. **Shoes**, £25, 2½-10, Next.



The new look prints

under
£30

Get set for summer in eye-popping prints – think bright, bold and fabulous

Look out for dramatic shapes

Graphic prints call for graphic styles to show them off. Opt for batwing sleeves, puffy shoulders, tulipy skirts and dresses that have oversized statement pockets.

Dress, £15, 8-16, Fashion Union. **Bangle**, £14, Oceanic Jewellers.



Pick figure-fixing prints

The bolder the print, the better it is for disguising lumps and bumps! For the ultimate drop-a-dress-size outfit, hunt out vertical or diagonal stripes like this fab top – it sure beats spending hours at the gym!

Top, £13, 8–20, Primark.
Jeans, £20, 6–18, New Look. **Necklace**, £18, Freedom at Top Shop.

Do the tunic & leggings thing

Make dressing down a more glamorous affair by layering up a slouchy tunic over a skinny T and leggings. Add a pair of funky flats and you're all set for the weekend!

Tunic, £18, 8-22, F&F at Tesco. **Leggings**, £12.50, 8-18, Marks & Spencer. **Top**, £28 for three (lime, orange, pink), 6-22, Next. **Necklace**, £15, Wallis. **Shoes**, £29.99, 2½-10, Next.



Go graphic in black and white

If too much colour makes you nervous, ease into the trend with a monochrome print. Try adding colour-pop accessories to brighten it up.

Dress, £22, 8-20, Peacocks. **Belt**, £15, Accessorize. **Earrings**, £8 for six pairs, Dorothy Perkins. **Bangle**, £5, Dorothy Perkins. **Ring**, £8, Wallis. **Shoes**, £29.99, 3-8, Linzi.

Give your jeans a glamover!

An eye-wateringly bright top with co-ordinating accessories is a fast way to glam up your jeans for a night out - think zinging colours, a bold print and a touch of sparkle!

Top, £18, 8-20, Matalan.

Jeans, £16, 8-20, Tu at Sainsbury's.

Bracelets, £15 each, Oceanic Jewellers.

Yes please!

60 ways to wow

Looking new-season fabulous is easy with our guide to what to buy – and how to wear it...

under
£30

Grab a glam bag

You could spend a month's mortgage money on a glam number from Marc Jacobs – or you could throw one of these lovelies in your trolley the next time you're shopping in Asda! All the glitz and glam of a designer bag, but at less than the price of a DVD!
Bag, £8, George at Asda.



Smarten up with a blazer

If you bought a lightweight blazer last year you can pat yourself on the back, because they're set to be a huge trend again this summer. Use one to toughen up a pretty dress, smarten up a pair of jeans or trendy up a pair of black trousers. Make sure it's single-breasted – and remember to roll up the sleeves!

Jacket, £20, 8-20, F&F at Tesco. Striped top, £18, 8-22, Portfolio. Scarf, £5, F&F at Tesco. Bracelet, £1.50, Primark. Trousers, £26, 6-18, Next. Cage shoes, £20, 3-8, Tesco.



Be brave with block colour

A little something in a paintbox bright shade is an easy way to liven up those simple pieces we all have in our wardrobes. Try a colour-pop top or dress under a black jacket, a pair of the latest coloured jeans with a white T and pumps or some eye-wateringly bright accessories with a neutral outfit.



Top, £29, 8-16, Very.

Rings, £6 each, Dorothy Perkins.

Dress, £19.99, 8-16, TKMaxx.

Jeans, £22, 10-20, Bhs.

Top, £16, 10-20, M&Co.

Bag, £6, Matalan.

Take a tip from Posh!

You have to admit it, Mrs Beckham knows about dresses – well, the high street seems to think so, with rails of Posh-style pencil dresses everywhere. Make sure your one is knee length or longer for the classiest look and wear it with the highest heels you can manage.



Pinstripe dress, £16, 8-22, George at Asda.

Peplum dress, £18, 8-22, Tesco.

Cowl-neck dress, £18, 8-20, Matalan.

Add a bit of sparkle

Whether it's a stunning sequinned top, a twinkly trimmed skirt or a glittering clutch – a little something sparkly will lift all those boring basics in seconds. Don't think sequins are for evenings only either – throw a sparkly T on over leggings or jeans for everyday glamour. Sequinned top, £28, 6-22; bag, £15, both Next. Bangles: pearl and studded sets, £8 each; pewter set, £6, all New Look. Leggings, £8, Marks & Spencer.

Go large on the sunnies

Eye bags? What eye bags? A pair of the latest supersized shades will cover a multitude of sins and make you look instantly glam – we've already got ours!



Aviators, £12, Jane Norman.

Tortoiseshell, £18, Dorothy Perkins.

Red, £3, Primark.

Black, £5, Tesco.

Nude, £7, Tesco.

Treat your feet to heels that don't hurt!

Start rummaging in your cupboards because the kitten heel is back! They were all over the catwalks and now the high street is stuffed with them, too – go for a court shape with a pointed or round toe and wear them with everything from a pencil skirt to jeans.



Zebra print shoes, £27, 3-8, Wallis.

Pink suede, £12, 3-8, F&F at Tesco.

Red patent shoes, £29.99, 3-8, Kaleidoscope.

Two-tone shoes, £15, 3-8, Marks & Spencer.

Unleash your inner rock chick

Wear studs, zips, slinky shapes and lots of black – but not all at once! Add sexy shoe boots to a little black dress, wear a studded cuff or belt with a simple outfit or go for a rock chick bag as a wearable way to try the trend.



Shoe boots, £20, 3-7, Heaton's.



Skirt, £14, 8-18, Peacocks.

Top, £12, 10-22, Bhs.

Bag, £20, Bhs.

Cuff, £8, Peacocks.

Pretty up your jewellery

Ribbons, flowers and pearls are key details for the latest jewellery to update a plain top or dress without being too girly – it has to be big and bold, not delicate and fiddly though.

Droplet necklace, £16, Accessorize.

Floral ring, £3.99, Internationale.

Ribbon-tie loop necklace, £10, Tesco.

Pearly earrings, £7, Bhs.

Jewels and pearls bracelet, £15, Dorothy Perkins.

Go for a trendy trouser

Prise yourself out of your slimming black bootcuts and try a new trouser shape. Just make sure you wear the right shoes with them...

PEGGED

Pleats at the waist, a roomy cut around the thighs, tapered at the ankle... they're surprisingly flattering. Tuck in your tops and wear with a medium/high chunky heel.

TREGGINGS

Half trouser, half legging – wear with tunic tops or longline cardis and the new season shoe boots for a glam look. They look great with pumps for daytime, too.

HAREM

Choose a fairly slim leg and a lightweight fabric and they're a wearable look for every day. Team with low heels or flat sandals and a waist-length fitted top.

£14, 8-20, Matalan.

Cuffed shoes, £12, 4-8, Matalan.

£25, 8-18, Marks & Spencer.

Shoe boots, £20, 3-8, F&F at Tesco.

£23, 12-32, Marisota.

Sandals, £25, 4-9, Marisota.

Buy something yellow...

...and no, a lemon doesn't count! It's the colour of the season so get in there early for a hit of instant sunshine. Go for pale lemon shades if you're fair and brighter versions if you have olive or dark skin. Not convinced it will suit you? Then try a splash of colour with a pair of yellow shoes or a bag instead.

Dress, £25, 8-20, Matalan.

Necklace, £18, Marks & Spencer.

Shoes, £12, 3-8, F&F at Tesco.



under
£30

Do nudes

If you buy one thing this season make it something in a nude shade. Wear it with grey or white for a fresh look or go for some drama and mix it with a splash of graphic black.



Lacy cardigan, £25, 8-20, Dorothy Perkins.

Shoes, £18, 3-8, Peacocks.

Dress, £24.99, TKMaxx.



Corsage, £1, Primark.

Cardigan, £24, 10-22, David Emmanuel Deluxe at Bonmarche.



Dress, £25, 8-14, Boohoo.com.

Bag, £28, Accessorize.

essentials 23

Try feminine frills (without looking girly!)

If you haven't worn frills since you were at playschool, it's time to brace yourself for a revival! The good news? It's possible to do it without looking like an extra from *Little House on the Prairie*! Avoid flouncy cuffs, lacy versions and anything in pastel tones.

Tunic, £14, 8-20, F&F at Tesco. Necklace, £7, Dorothy Perkins. Bangle, £2, Primark. Clutch, £16, Love Label at Very. Jeggings, £5, 8-20, Tu at Sainsbury's.

Get yourself some glam wedges

We love an excuse to buy a new pair of shoes, and top of our wish list this summer is a pair of luxe looking metallic wedges. They'll magically lengthen and slim your legs, work as well with shorts and trousers as with a summer dress and are a whole lot easier to walk in than stilettos.

Wedges, £25, 2-8, La Redoute.



Lindt



Discover the ultimate pleasure



Only when the purest ingredients are blended to be as smooth as your skin, can a chocolate be called Excellence. Lindt Master Chocolatiers since 1845.

www.lindt.com





Jacket, £22,
8-18, Peacocks.

Leggings, £12,
6-16, Jane
Norman.

Ring, £10,
Wallis.



Shoes, £12,
3-8, George
at Asda.

1 Smarten up with tailoring and heels. Give it an 80s vibe with a slouchy blazer and leggings – perfect for smart days.

Bag, £19.50,
Marks & Spencer.



Scarf,
£5,
Peacocks.

2 Add luxe layers and a pop of pink! A cashmere-blend cardi will soften the look, then brighten up with some bold accessories.



Cashmere-blend cardi,
£25, 8-18,
Matalan.

Bracelet,
£6, Tesco.

Shoes, £25,
3-8, Linzi
Shoes.



Bag, £8, George
at Asda.

1 tunic 4 ways

Look how you can turn a simple little tunic into the star of your wardrobe!

under
£30



Silk printed tunic,
£29, 8-24, Very.



Belt, £12,
Debenhams.

4

Belt it over black for nights out. Create some curves with a belt, then add pegged trousers and some glam extras.



Trousers, £14,
8-18, Matalan.



Clutch bag, £20,
Debenhams.



Bracelets, £15, Debenhams.



Shoe boots,
£29.50, Marks
& Spencer.

Shoes, £29.50,
3-8, Marks &
Spencer.



Bag, £10,
George at
Asda.



Jeans, £16,
8-22, Tu at
Sainsbury's.



Polo neck, £15,
6-22, Marks &
Spencer.

3

Wear it with your skinnies. Pop a polo and skinny jeans underneath, then add a pair of heels for dressed down chic.



Bracelet,
£5, George
at Asda.

**We've hidden
90 Pringles
in this picture.**



You'll find 90 crisps to share in every can of new Pringles Original. Everyone's a winner.

treat yourself

£10

We can't believe this is from a supermarket, the tassel is so designer-esque! Blue barrel bag with tassel detail, George at Asda.

£10

Designer look-alike – at a snip of the price! Super-smart lilac bag with gold twist lock, Peacocks.

£28

These were big news on the catwalk and now thankfully (for our bank balances) they're starring on the high street. Coral slouch bag with studs and diamanté ring detail, Debenhams.

£26

We love the gorgeous gem detailing and retro handle. Purple bag with jewel detail and optional long strap, £26, A-shu.co.uk.

Grab one today!

£8

Quilted bags are still big news, but you want one in the latest colour-pop brights. Pink and purple quilted bag, Matalan.

Treat yourself to a fab new day bag (or two at these prices!), in a delicious spring shade

Under £30

£25

Patent is a durable trend that's set to stick around for quite a while. Turquoise patent tote bag, Per Una at Marks & Spencer.

£25

Yummy sorbet shades are everywhere right now and this one will update your whites in an instant. Lemon bag with zip front, Jane Norman.

£25

This chain detail bag will look fab with a striped T if you're going for the nautical look. White patchwork bag with chain detail, New Look.

£22

You can't beat a holds-all roomy tote, perfect to hold all your favourite mags. Red patent tote, Bhs.

£29.99

This one is so stylish and roomy – could it be the next 'it' bag? Green patchwork shoulder bag, Pavers.



YOUR DAILY
DOSE OF
VITAMIN C



Bursting with Berryness

Ready for love?

The romantic look is huge this season and you'll see heart motifs on everything from dresses and shoes to undies and bags. I'll be going for a low-key take on the look with this sterling silver locket from H Samuel – pretty without being too girly, perfect!

win with essentials

We have ten lockets to give away. For your chance to win one, turn to page 131 and tick ESSTREAT1 06 – or enter by phone or text. Locket, £29.99, H Samuel.

Cardigan, £18, 6–20, Peacocks.



Style Director Lucy Turner reveals all the news hot from the high street

under £30

If you buy one thing this month...

...make it this designer-lookalike cardigan jacket. It's fabulously chic and looks as good with black basics as it does with skinny jeans – not bad for £18!

It only cost how much?

If you haven't been into QS recently, you'll be amazed at how trendy it is – and the prices are unbelievable! I've got my eye on this colour-pop cardigan, which is just £10. Don't have a store near you? Just check out the new collection on qsgroup.co.uk.



Cardigan, £10, 10–22; top, £4.50, 10–22; jeans, £10, 10–22; sandals, £7, 3–8, all QS.

PRETTY GLAM!

Australian designer Collette Dinnigan has teamed up with Marks & Spencer to launch a collection of underwear that's ultra feminine and luxe, with lots of silk chiffon and lace. Prices start at £6 for knickers. It's all so gorgeous, I'm giving my undies drawer an overhaul!



Calling all shoe addicts!

If you love shoes, you'll adore wynsors.co.uk. It has a huge selection of bargain shoes – from slippers to stilettos and everything in between! My hot tip is this pair of cobalt satin heels, so glam and just £10!



Only £10

3 WAYS TO WOW!

Yes, you can be nautically chic – without going OTT.

So on trend – not-too-high heels, £25, 3–8, Marks & Spencer.



Stand-out-in-a-crowd bag, £28, Next.



Brilliant-value dress, £20, 8–24, Tu at Sainsbury's.



Middle age... what's that?

Dancing, dating, bending and stretching, shopping, or looking out for Number One – what does it take to keep middle age at bay? Here, three readers say 'youth' is all about your frame of mind, not your birth certificate

I'm the only person I need to worry about

Hilary Taitt, 38, is a sales and marketing manager and lives in Essex.

My married friends who have kids look their age, and they'd be the first to admit that they feel it, too. They put it down to all the hard work, expense and exhausting hours it takes to bring up a family.

At 38, there's a certain amount of pressure on me to take the same route, but it hasn't happened yet. I believe having only myself to look after is the main factor in why I look, and feel, so young.

Obviously, I'm not immune to ageing – I can already feel the wear and tear on my body and see the grey hairs – but unlike those friends who have to put other family members before themselves, I have the time and resources to do what I need to keep it all at bay.

When I was younger, I never used to cleanse and tone my skin, but now I do it religiously. I have a facial every month without fail, I only use the best products, and I get the best haircut I can afford. It's all about me because my circumstances mean that I can afford it, and I can prioritise it.

I used to be a professional dancer. I started when I was six and have danced all my life. It's my passion. Now, my main fear about getting older is losing my flexibility, or having a debilitating illness such as arthritis.

I can already feel my body changing: my cardiovascular system isn't as sharp as it used to be, and if I don't train for a few days, the recovery process is much harder. Also, I used to dance and exercise just for the love of it, now I need to do it to keep the weight off. All this is scary, like a constant reminder the mileage is clocking up.

My friends say I'm 'high maintenance' and I suppose I am, but if I wasn't, then ageing would get the better of me. No one can stop ageing all together, but putting up this kind of fight makes me feel younger than my 38 years.

'I used to dance and exercise just for the love of it, but now I do it to keep the weight off'



Feel young... forever!

Cognitive hypnotherapist Trevor Silvester has these helpful suggestions:

- ◆ As we age our brain craves certainty and that's why we need to challenge it with new experiences. Our lives open up again if we see the world that is really out there, not what we expect to see.
- ◆ Staying optimistic is key. It helps if we focus on what we have, instead of looking back on what we might have lost.
- ◆ Use it or lose it: keep the brain firing by doing crosswords, sudokus, puzzles.

'Everyone needs something to help them remember what it was like to be young, and for me, it's clothes'

I make myself stand out from the crowd

Katherine Blyth, 45, is a personal stylist. She lives in Buckinghamshire with her two sons, Jack, 12, and Lucas, 9.

What scares me about growing older is becoming invisible to others. I don't want to be overlooked just because of my age. Young people are always noticed first, wherever they are, because their youth shines through, and the thought of not being noticed because of the way I look frightens me.

I shop to retain my youth. I go to Top Shop and H&M where I know I won't bump into other middle-aged women. I buy clothes that

suit me, and flatter me and never, ever, slip into the 'uniform' of the middle-aged woman.

I hate anything that can be described as 'classic' – in other words it's safe, boring and matronly. That's my worst nightmare! Like the 'wraparound dress' and calf-length skirts that are supposed to be the one thing every woman my age should have in her wardrobe. But they hide all your assets and flatter none of them.

I don't think the label 'mutton dressed as lamb' could ever be applied to me, because even though I like to dress younger, I'm not blind to the changes age has brought. I don't have the figure I used to have: my tummy has a tyre around it that I just can't shift and the skin at the top of my arms has become saggy.

Shopping recently, I noticed the 'shorts

and tights' trend was back in. I used to wear that to work when I was in my twenties, and I had to stop myself taking them off the rail because my legs have varicose veins now, and they're not as slender as they used to be.

The hard part is, on the inside, I feel the same as I did in my twenties, yet I know that although I might put on the same clothes as some young people and chat about shopping and make-up, I'm the one with children, bills and a pension to think about these days.

Everyone needs something to help them remember what it was like to be young, and for me, it's clothes. I go out with friends who are the same age as me and I stand out, for all the right reasons. I feel sexy, and unique and that's the next best thing to being young.

I make sure I look young, so I can feel young

June 'Jay' Tapfield, 58, is a fitness instructor from Essex and has one grown-up daughter, Maria.

If I could be any age again I'd be 26 because I was so beautiful then. I look at young girls today and I envy their shiny hair, flawless skin and bright eyes, and I know that they don't realise how lucky they are.

One day, just like me, they'll wake up, look in the mirror and think: 'Dear God, I've been hit by the ugly stick!'

The gym has been like a second home to me for the last 20 years. Now, as well as coaching three yoga classes a week with my sister, I do a couple of hours in the morning and then I might go for a run in the afternoon. That's because I want to look good and having a good body is something I'm in control of.

But, until recently, I wasn't in control of what I looked like. When I hit 50, I looked at myself and didn't like how the years had taken their toll on my face. I used to love putting on Cleopatra-style eyeliner, but somewhere along the way, my eyelids had disappeared. Most people accept the affect that ageing has on your looks, but I thought: 'Why should I?' My old face didn't match my healthy body and I didn't like it.

So I had some work done with the Harley Medical Group in London. I had a facelift when I was 52, and then two years later, I had the skin around my eyes tightened. The difference is quite amazing.

I'm under no illusion that just because I've had my eyes done I now look 25, but it does affect my confidence. Who wants a face full of wrinkles? In what way can that make you feel good about yourself?

I feel very lucky that I've had a good life. I've been married once and had two partners, and I have a lovely daughter and a grandchild. Now that I'm older, I have quite a lot of free time, so I can use it to have a manicure and a pedicure, and work out at the gym.

I can't change my age, but I can change the way I feel about it. I don't want to look old, and now I don't think I do.

'I want to look good and having a good body is something I'm in control of'



THE ANTI-DIRT
FORCE FIELD
FOR YOUR
BATHROOM



New Cif Power Cream is now even more powerful because it leaves a long lasting invisible shield that keeps new dirt and grime from really sticking. So next time you clean, dirt comes right off. Goes on easy, comes off easy. Simple as that.



I packed a bag & left my old life

What makes a woman walk out on her partner of ten years, her family, friends and her job, empty her bank account, get on the first flight to a city where she knows no one – and never come back? Louise Hughes, 44, did just that. Now, three years later, she tells us what drove her to leave her old life behind

Clean slates, new beginnings, second chances – they're the stuff dreams are made of. Perhaps that's why so few people chase them, because they just seem so far out of reach.

If you'd asked me five years ago whether I could see myself rebuilding my life from scratch, I'd have laughed you out of the room. But now I know that we all have the power to change our lives, however stuck we think we are, if only we have the guts to do it.

In February 2006, I was well and truly in a rut. I'm still not sure how I got there – if I'd known that perhaps I wouldn't have taken such extreme measures to get out. Over time, I think I lost small parts of my personality either because I was trying to do better in my job, or making my relationship work, or fitting in with friends or pleasing my family.

I'd been with my partner, Steve, for ten years. When we got together, he'd been married and had children. We'd both come out of bad relationships, but what we had together felt

different – I thought we had something special. We seemed to want the same things out of life, but as time went on I began to realise that as much as I cared for Steve's children I wanted my own. He felt the opposite.

When his kids came to stay, I'd look forward to it for days. I'd cook them their favourite meals and plan trips out – all things I longed to do with children of my own. But there was no changing Steve's mind. I also started to feel I was making all the running in terms of work and money, and that he didn't value me

the way I valued him.

As the years went by, we didn't seem to have a reason to discuss anything anymore. It wasn't

that we argued – we just stopped talking. With hindsight, I can see that I just accepted my lacklustre lot. By my late thirties, I was working days as a care assistant and evenings in a hospital, so I could afford to spend weekends doing nice things with Steve and the kids.

Eventually not one part of my life was making me happy. When I got up that cold,

winter morning in 2006 I'd had enough.

There was no one thing that tipped me over the edge, just a strong feeling that something had to change. So, I calmly put some clothes into a suitcase. Then, leaving the house as if I was going to work, I went to the bank and took out my savings: £1,000.


No plans to stay away

That's what I had left to show for my old life – and what I paid for my new one. I went to the airport, and booked a flight to the first place that came up on the departures board: Belfast. I had no plans to stay away forever, in fact I had no plans at all. I called work and told them I was ill then, as I stepped on to the plane, I felt numb. Only then did the reality of what I was doing begin to hit home. I was leaving behind everything I knew and had no idea what my friends and family would think.

I'd never seriously considered leaving Steve before, and it broke my heart to be leaving the children, too. But I was just a small part of their life, and my own life needed saving.

As we touched down in Belfast, I thought about the security, the trusting relationships

'I needed to get away... my old life was suffocating me'



'I had a deep-set feeling that told me I was doing the right thing'

and the familiarity of home that I was leaving behind and although I felt scared and guilty, I felt mostly excitement.

I'm not reckless or a thrill-seeker, and I could easily have turned around and got on the next flight back to England before anyone had time to notice. But I had a deep-set feeling that told me I was doing the right thing. That's what kept me going.

Guilt began to take hold

In Belfast, I found a cheap hotel, where I planned to stay for a few days, but as I sat in the empty hotel room, the enormity of my decision hit me and I was flooded with self-doubt. I called my mum and we had a very emotional conversation. I explained that I just needed to get away – that I was suffocating in my old life. 'I don't know how long I'm staying, but I'll keep in touch,' I said, before hanging up. That was when the guilt really began to take hold.

Later that evening, I got a barrage of calls and text messages from Steve. I told him where I was and asked him to leave me alone so that I could figure out what to do next. He was angry and confused, so the messages and calls continued for days, but I ignored him and tried to focus on what I was doing. The most difficult part wasn't Steve or my family, it was trying to take my mind off the children. They were innocent in all this and I knew I was going to miss them terribly.

Over the first few days, I wandered aimlessly around Belfast, thinking about what I had done. I spent my time in parks, cafés and walking for miles in the cold. The

pressure soon built up and before the end of my first week, I went into meltdown. I had no job, nowhere to live, and my £1,000 was fast running out. I felt like I'd burnt my bridges with my old life, and now had nothing.

Walking in the park one morning, I just burst into tears and couldn't stop. I thought about Steve and how he must be feeling – I hadn't been happy in our relationship, but I didn't want to hurt him. I'd told my boss I wasn't going back to work and I felt guilty for leaving my colleagues in the lurch. Why hadn't I thought it all through more carefully?

I sat on a bench and sobbed – something I never did in public – and a man approached. 'Are you alright?' he asked me. He was the first person I'd spoken to properly, face to face, since I'd made my escape from my old life, and I found myself baring my soul to this complete stranger.

Carving out a new life

Whether it was fate or just good luck, I don't know, but the man's wife owned a care home and was looking to take on new staff. Within two weeks, I had a job and, with my promised salary, was able to rent a room in a house. It wasn't always easy, but after those first few weeks the year flew by.

Steve eventually came to terms with my decision and left me alone, and even though my family didn't understand why I chose Belfast, they knew I had to get away and tried to be supportive. I soon met friends through

work who helped me settle into my new surroundings. I moved to my own rented house and, finally, started living for myself.

I went out for drinks with friends and met new people for the first time in years. It was so nice to be Louise and not just someone's other half. People admired my courage and I began to feel proud of my decision to move and start again from scratch.

Was cancer my 'payback'?

Then in March 2007 something happened that brought everything into very sharp focus. After finding a lump in my breast, I was diagnosed with cancer. I was petrified: was this payback for what I'd done?

In the May, I had a mastectomy and reconstruction, followed by six months of gruelling chemotherapy. I split my time between Belfast and my mum's home in the Midlands, where she looked after me. Steve sent me a text message to say he'd heard about my illness and hoped I was OK, and I was grateful. By March 2008, the chemotherapy had been successful and I moved back to Belfast permanently.

Breast cancer took a lot away from me, but it gave me time to think, and even in my darkest moments I knew I'd done the right thing.

When I wished things would go back to 'normal', it was my life in Belfast that I dreamt of, not the one I'd left behind a year earlier.

'Three years on, I'm happy to be alive and to just be me'

Three years on, I'm still living here, enjoying my job and having fun with my new friends. Perhaps in the future I'll have another relationship, but for now I'm happy to be alive and to just be me.

I have regrets. I miss the children and I often wonder how they're getting on. Sometimes I wish that I'd done things differently, but no decision is perfect and, ultimately, I know that I did what I did simply because I had to.

TALK TO US...

Was Louise's decision to leave right or just selfish? Let us know what you think – email us at essentials_feedback@ipcmedia.com.



NEW – FIORI

**TELL
MAGNET
IF YOU'RE
LOUD**

AND WE'LL
CREATE A
KITCHEN THAT
SCREAMS 'YOU'

Tell Magnet all about you and we'll help you create your perfect kitchen. If, like Isobel, you want everything to be loud and bright then our dazzling Fiori range could be just what you're looking for. Or if you prefer things a little quieter we'll show you some of our more subtle ranges and innovations like our silent, soft close hinges that come as standard. Whatever you'd like to happen in your kitchen, just tell Magnet.

Magnet WHAT
HAPPENS
IN YOUR
KITCHEN?



Our unique Full Circle Service is now supported
by Government endorsed standards from TrustMark
on all retail kitchens installed by Magnet.

FOR YOUR NEAREST STORE OR TO REQUEST A BROCHURE
CALL 0845 123 6789 OR VISIT WWW.MAGNET.CO.UK

Living our dream

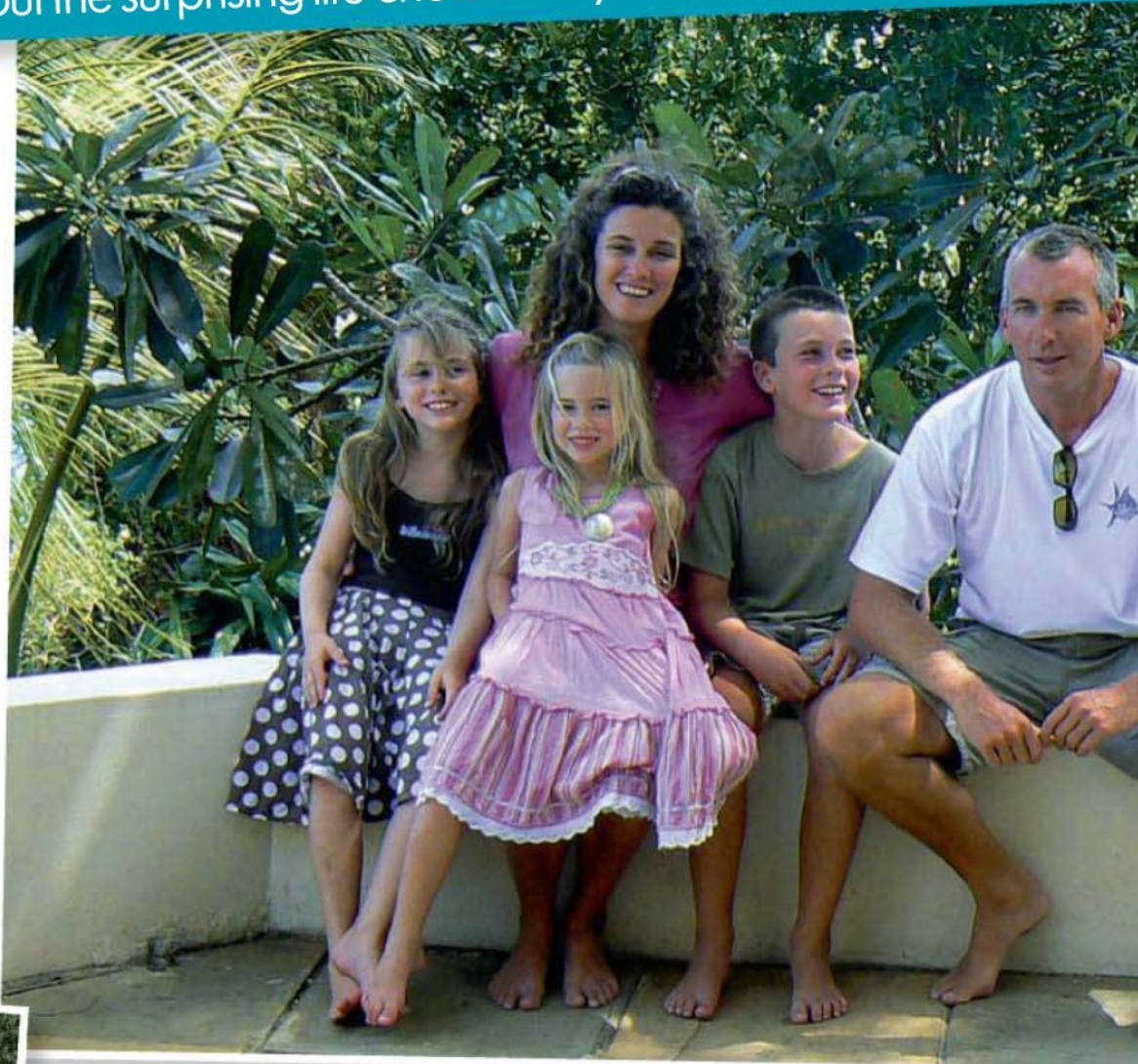
Why is one woman's nightmare another woman's happy-ever-after?
Here, two readers talk about the surprising life choices they've made

'We packed up the kids and set off round the world'

Rachel Tims, 42, lives in Dorset with husband Nick, 45, and children Gregor, 12, Jasmina, 10, and Kinvara, 8. Four years ago, the family left England for a 17-month round-the-world 'gap year'.

When Nick and I were on honeymoon in India we met a family who were travelling round the world with their young children. Their adventure made a real impression on me, but Nick was never sure. I badgered him for 14 years until finally he felt ready to take a career break and agreed we could go.

We sold our house, took the kids out of school and, in June 2006, set off through Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Europe. The children handled the change very well. They were only out of school for four terms, but when we could we employed a tutor. Only Jasmina had any problems – she



Gregor shares a joke with Kenyan tribesmen.



Jasmina strides out in Southern Namibia.

missed having her own room. She wanted a place to put her things, so I'd spend hours drawing her pictures of what our house would be like when we eventually came home.

For me, the hardest parts were the day-to-day slog. We were taking buses crammed full of people, trying to hold onto the kids and keep them safe and occupied, and manage all the bags. And we'd have to plan in stops where we knew we could get our clothes washed and dried.

Food was also a problem that we didn't think about initially. Nick and I would eat whatever was offered, but the kids wouldn't. Often there was no familiar food for them – none of them would touch goat stew – so we

made sure we always had Marmite with us, because finding bread was pretty easy.

But the trip was one of the most amazing experiences of all our lives. The children became incredibly close, and they still are. They played with each other, and entertained themselves with the bare minimum, drawing pictures and making puzzles from just paper, scissors and glue.

That's a lesson that's stayed with them and, even now, they don't need electronic toys.

The trip was one of the most amazing experiences of all our lives

There were scary moments: Gregor had suspected malaria in Botswana and had to be treated in a remote and very basic church hospital. Then Kinvara got food poisoning and was severely dehydrated. It was a



Our travelling adventure has made us close – it's a shared experience we'll have forever.

nine-hour drive to the nearest hospital and I remember sitting in the car thinking 'What have I done, exposing the kids to my ridiculous adventure?' But Kinvara was kept in hospital for two weeks, and soon recovered.

In the end, we got to New Zealand and I remember Nick and I looking at a world map to plan where we were going to go next. We had wanted to visit South America, but we were missing our family and friends and, although it was incredible fun, we were exhausted from the constant moving. It was time to go home.

Today, we're a very close family. We have shared an experience that no one can ever take away from us – it's something the children will have forever. They have said they want to travel again when they're older and we talk about our adventure all the time.

'I live ten miles from the nearest shop'

Debbie Warner, 30, lives with her husband Richard, 28, a forester, and son Lewis, 6. Two years ago, the family moved from Berwick-upon-Tweed to rural Northumberland, where they grow their own vegetables and are virtually self-sufficient.

I grew up on a farm, so had a relaxed, happy-go-lucky childhood, and I wanted my son to have the same experience. However, after I was married and Lewis was born, we ended up in a tiny two-bedroom semi. Richard was a light fitter and travelled around the country a lot, but all the time we craved a simpler life. So he started looking for work in a more rural environment, and soon landed a job as a forester.

The house we live in now has three bedrooms, a big garden and is surrounded by fields and woods. Lewis has autism and ADHD, and I know the fresh air and healthy diet has really helped him.

Life here is very different from how it was for us in town. The nearest village is ten miles away and that makes us quite isolated. I have to be organised (there's no nipping to the

shop for bread or milk if we run out), and our social life, or what we have of one, has no spontaneity to it. If we meet friends in the pub and both want to drink, it costs £50 there and back for a taxi, and then there's the cost of a babysitter. I do get lonely because I don't work, and I miss being able to pop round to a neighbour's house for tea.

There's a lot of hard work but, for me,

that's all part and parcel of choosing a greener way of living. We grow our own fruit and vegetables,

use a wood-burner to heat the house and water, and I bake my own bread. We have four dogs, three cats, three ferrets, two rabbits, a hamster, a guinea pig, two geese, and 17 chickens, which give us plenty of eggs. We're also about to buy two pigs, which we plan to raise for meat.

We buy secondhand clothes in charity shops to keep costs down, we don't take holidays, because we can't leave the animals, and we don't buy fast food. But I don't miss these things because I didn't have them when I was growing up.

It didn't surprise my family when we packed up and moved here, but I do suspect my friends think I'm a bit batty living knee-deep in muck. They couldn't do it, and wouldn't want to. But it suits us down to the ground.

Friends think I'm batty living knee-deep in muck – they wouldn't want to do it



It's hard work – but worth it, says Debbie.



There's room to play and lots of animals – Lewis loves it!



With so many chickens, eggs are always on the menu.

Unravel to reveal your beautiful skin in just two weeks*.



New Dove pro-age Advanced Beauty Care range. Now each product has a new advanced formulation that when used regularly, reveals firmer, more radiant and supple skin*.



Including:

- More AHAs than any other** to gently remove dull surface skin cells
- Vitamin B3 to help brighten your skin tone
- Natural lipids proven to improve your skin's elasticity.

The new All Over Body Serum works in combination with your favourite Dove pro-age product, for a complete body care regime.

The best visible proof: your beautiful skin.

*agreed by 72% of 150 women

**Key competitor in the mass market.



Hand Cream • All Over Body Serum • Body Lotion

Beauty has no age limit.

What I'd say to the 21-year-old me

Think back to when you were aged 21. Were you cocky, clever, shy or were you about to get it all very, very wrong? We ask *essentials* readers what advice they'd give... if they could do it all over again



Take the Italian job

Don't turn down that job in Rome, thinking you'll miss England. Years later you'll sit at work daydreaming about

being fluent in Italian, having a sexy tan and being a size 10 after all that healthy Mediterranean food. You'll also convince yourself you could have married an Italian count, rather than a bricklayer from Leeds!

Karen Bowley, 50, Horsforth



Trust your instincts

Later this year you'll twist your ankle on some ice and everyone will convince you it's just a sprain, even though it's black and blue.

It isn't, it's broken! Get yourself to the doctor's straight away and then you won't have to wear so many ugly, 'ankle-supportive' shoes when you're older.

Samina Parmar, 31, Bradford



'You could have married an Italian count!'

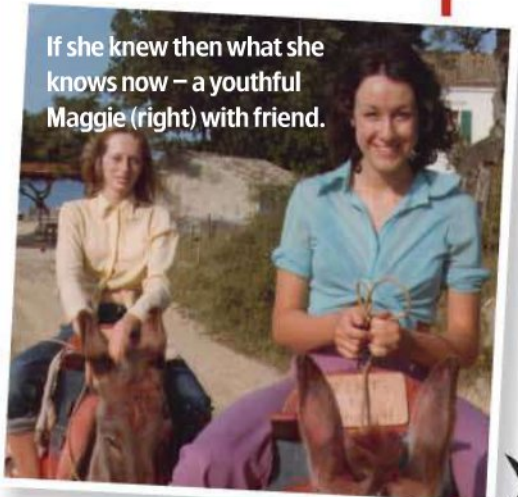


Go your own way

Don't listen to your careers adviser. She'll tell you that your only career options are

teaching, nursing or admin work. She's lying. Pursue something you really love – like dancing or gardening – and make a career out of it. If you don't, you'll end up a credit controller for a business software company (which is as boring as it sounds) and wishing you were arranging flowers or hanging baskets instead.

Maggie Thompson, 55, Brighouse



Hang on in there for Mr Right

Don't waste two years on Jacob Davies. He doesn't love you, no matter how much you want him to. He'll use up all your emotion and energy,

and warp your view of relationships. There's someone better for you out there – you'll meet him when you're 26 – so hold fire. Oh, and stop spending your inheritance – that money can be used for bigger and better things later on.

Laura Hibbert, 30, Yeadon



remember when



Let your hair down while you can

You might be footloose and fancy free in Southern Spain right now, but in 18 months you'll have started a job in PR and will be

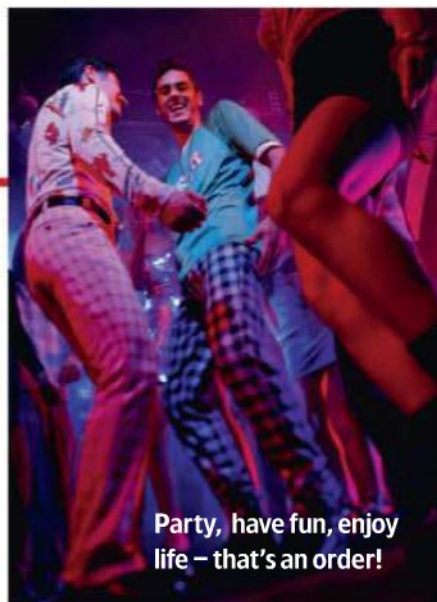
working 12-hour days. So head out to eat dinner at midnight like the locals and go to all the fiestas. Make the most of the free time you have because soon your career, when it begins, will fill every waking moment.
Suzy Glaskie, 39, Manchester



Live life to the full

Enjoy being healthy and carefree. Go to as many parties as you can; dance more and sleep less. You're

going to have major surgery at the end of your 21st year, and carefree times will be a thing of the past. It'll take you a long time to recover, but memories of fun times will make things a little easier.
Alison Brushfield, 42, Fordcombe



Party, have fun, enjoy life – that's an order!



One for the album – yes we did wear fab hats!

Prove you had a misspent youth

Take lots of pictures of you and all your girlfriends having fun – nights out, girlie holidays, the lot. When you're older you'll look on in envy as your kids post pictures of their adventures on Facebook and you have so little to show for yours.

Christine Taylor, 55, London

'Don't buy the outfit your Mum likes for your 21st'



Ooh la la – just say non!

You're about to go to France for a year as part of your university course; make sure you spend

more than three days looking for somewhere to live! If you don't, you'll end up renting a shoebox in the basement of a family house out in the sticks. It will have about an hour of natural light a day, bars across the windows and a bed that doubles up as a chair and a desk! And you'll spend more time moaning about it than practising your French.

Kate Wilkins, 30, York



Mum doesn't always know best!

Do not go shopping for your 21st birthday outfit with your mum. She'll convince you

that the garish silk dress is a good investment, even though it's ghastly. The dress will come back to haunt you years later at your hen party,

when you'll be forced to wear it all night and you'll cringe every time you see it in the photo album. It could all be avoided and you'll look a damn sight better if you just go shopping with your friends instead.

Julie Besbrode, 38, Hale



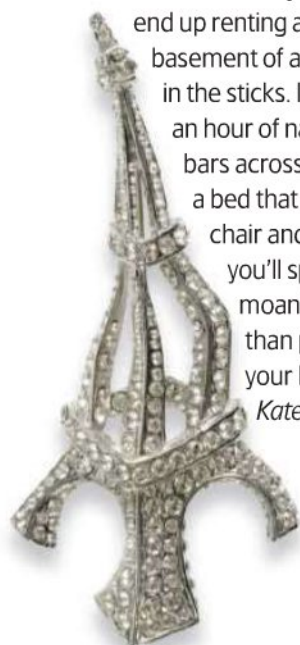
Don't miss that chance

In a couple of months you'll be given the opportunity to pose questions

to the Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, at your local radio station. Do not turn this chance down just because you're too busy. I know you don't

agree with her policies, but she is an icon of your time and you won't see any of her backbone and conviction in the politicians of the future. You'll kick yourself for years to come for not meeting such an influential figure.

Sheena Roberts, 47, Calverley



Nose job = £3,000.00

Boob job = £4,500.00

Teeth job = £3.99



For a brighter, whiter smile use Beverly Hills Formula whitening toothpaste. Purity Laboratories' unique range of anti-bacterial agents and low abrasion anti-stain polishers, was shown by BBC TV's Watchdog programme to remove over 90% of staining. Beverly Hills Formula is less abrasive than many non-whitening toothpastes, yet offers maximum whitening power and all round protection.

Beverly Hills Formula
UPGRADE TO HEALTHIER WHITENING
www.beverlyhillsformula.com





No excuses! You need to use the right foundation

'Foundation is the perfect base for any make-up – it is like the canvas for your whole face,' says Fiona Jolly, Maybelline New York's celebrity make-up artist. To look as natural and flawless as possible your foundation needs to be exactly the right shade and formulation for your skin.

HERE'S HOW TO GET IT RIGHT, EVERY TIME

Buy your foundation from a department store? 'Be careful of the light in-store, which is notoriously bad for choosing make-up,' says Fiona. 'Try a shade on your skin and then go outside to test it out in natural light.'

Skin changes colour with the seasons so you'll need a different shade for summer and winter. Use your hand as a palette and mix colours with a brush to get the right shade. Add a touch of moisturiser to your foundation in summer to keep it lighter and fresh looking.

Quick shade test

Swipe a stripe of colour onto your cheek, leave it for a few minutes to settle into your skin. If you can still see it, it's the wrong shade for you.



Simple ways to LOOK MORE GORGEOUS

Stuck in a beauty rut? All it takes is a few little tweaks to look miles better

Four steps to the perfect coverage



1
EXFOLIATE You need nice even skin so your foundation doesn't cling to dry, flaky areas. Try Clinique Turnaround Radiance Peel, £35.



2
PRIME Use a base primer to give the foundation something to hold on to. Try Smashbox Photo Finish Foundation Primer, £29.



3
APPLY WITH A BRUSH Use a brush or your fingers, rolling and pressing the foundation into your skin. Apply a second coat to your nose and chin. Try Revlon Foundation Brush, £10.99.



4
CONCEAL LAST Use concealer right at the end and apply to areas that still look red or shadowy with a small brush that lets you get into any nooks and crannies. Try Benefit Concealer Brush, £14.50.

FIND THE TEXTURE TO SUIT YOUR SKIN TYPE:

'Don't rush into buying foundation,' advises Fiona Jolly. 'Get a sample from your beauty counter and live in it first.' Here's her advice on choosing the perfect texture for you:

OILY SKIN Use an oil-free foundation to help prevent shiny areas on your face. **Try** Bobbi Brown Natural Finish Long Lasting Foundation SPF15, £28.

DRY SKIN A tinted moisturiser will give your skin a dewy finish without sitting on flaky areas or highlighting dry areas. **Try** Olay Definity Colour Enhancer Anti-ageing Moisturiser, £26.99

LINES AND WRINKLES Use a cream that feels light on your skin and won't sit in lines and wrinkles. **Try** Maybelline New York's Instant Rewind Foundation, £6.99.

ACNE-PRONE SKIN Use a non-comedogenic foundation, which won't clog pores and cause spots and blackheads. **Try** Dermalogica Treatment Foundation, £27.30.

SENSITIVE SKIN Go for products that are alcohol- and perfume-free to avoid causing irritation. Mineral foundation is perfect for sensitive skin. **Try** Revlon ColorStay Mineral Mousse Makeup, £9.99.



MAKE SURE YOUR SMILE IS BRIGHT

A lovely smile makes a great first impression, but not if your teeth look yellow or stained. Here's how to get them pearly white again...

◆ If your teeth could do with a little whitening, be careful what lipstick shade you wear. 'The one shade to watch out for is plum,' advises Fiona Jolly. 'Because plum shades can make yellow teeth look even yellower!'

◆ 'A slight shimmery gloss helps to make your lips look brighter and creates a whitening effect on your teeth, too,' advises Fiona. Go for blue-toned shades of silver, baby pink or fuchsia rather than nudes

or golds. **Try** Maybelline New York Color Sensational Gloss, £5.99.

◆ Partial to a glass of red wine or a coffee? Avoid them staining your teeth by chewing sugar-free gum afterwards – the gum helps to pull stains off your teeth.

◆ Want to lighten and whiten yellow, stained teeth? **We like** Pearl Drops Hollywood Smile Whitening Toothpaste, £4.49. It noticeably brightens your teeth in three weeks!

Check your cleanser...

Wish your skin was brighter, fresher and more glowy? First, try this fast skin test to check if you're using the wrong products...

- ✓ Wash your face with your usual cleanser and let it air-dry.
- ✓ Wait for at least five minutes and don't apply any toner or moisturiser.
- ✓ Then do the tissue test: Blot your face with tissue and leave it on your skin for a few seconds. If you have oily patches left on the tissue from your cheeks or T-zone, then your cleanser is too oily for you.
- ✓ Next open your mouth wide, as if you are yawning. If the skin feels tight and itchy your cleanser is too drying for your skin.





'Go to bed in my make-up?
Never been known!'

Wash away the day!

Skincare experts will tell you the most important thing you can do for your skin is to cleanse thoroughly before bed. Here's what you should use:

OILY SKIN Choose something with glycolic or salicylic acid to exfoliate spot-prone pores and reduce oil.

Try Garnier Pure Active Deep Pore Unclogging Wash, £4.99.

DRY SKIN Steer clear of soap formulations that will dry the skin and strip much-needed oils. **Try** Philosophy When Hope is Not Enough Hydrating Cleansing Balm, £21.60.

SENSITIVE Use a milky cleanser that can be removed with water or cotton wool. **Try** Avène Gentle Milk Cleanser, £10.95.



Pump up moisture levels

The perfect formula for your skin will make it glow.

OILY SKIN Don't starve your skin of moisture if it's oily. An oil-free formula to plump up moisture without creating greasiness is best. **Try** Simple Clear Skin Oil Balancing Moisturiser, £3.99.

TIGHT AND ITCHY SKIN Go for a rich formula to replace natural oils lost in cleansing. Ingredients like glycerin and hyaluronic acid are great for you as they help trap moisture. **Try** Vichy Lift Activ CxP Dry to Very Dry Day Cream, £24.

LINES AND WRINKLES You need a cream to help protect your skin against ageing. Multi-tasking products that firm and protect the skin help plump lines and prevent further damage at the same time. **Try** Nivea Visage Q10 Plus Anti-Wrinkle Day Cream SPF15, £10.85.



Bring out the best in your hair

Your hair is your most important accessory – you wear it every day, after all! – so get it in tip-top condition and choose the style and colour that really suit you. Here's how...

IS YOUR HAIR HEALTHY ENOUGH?

Want hair as lustrous and shiny as the girls in the hair ads on the TV? It is achievable. Here's the lowdown...

Is your hair dry?

If you use heated stylers like dryers, straighteners and tongs daily, then your hair is likely to be dry. It's usually difficult to style dry hair without using heated appliances as it lacks shine when dried naturally.

Long or curly hair is also more prone to dryness.

Is your hair weak or brittle?

This is usually caused by treatments that use harsh chemicals such as colouring, perming and straightening. If your hair breaks

when you brush it, it's weakened.

Is your hair normal? Healthy hair has a natural elasticity and will stretch 30% longer than its natural length when a strand is gently pulled. If this sounds like your hair, then congratulations!

How to get your hair back on track...

✓ 'Dry hair should be treated with weekly rehydrating treatments and should be protected during heat styling,' says Vivica Davies, Head of Colour at Mahogany Hairdressing. Try Schwarzkopf Bonacure Recharger, £9.85, which rehydrates hair to leave it shinier. And apply Paul Mitchell Heat Seal, £11.60, before styling to stop heated appliances damaging it.

✓ Weak hair needs rebuilding, as weakness is caused by damage to the outer layer of the hair shaft. Use protein-based treatments.

'They act like a Polyfilla for your hair,' says Vivica. If your hair is coloured try Joico K-Pak Color Therapy Restorative Oil, £15.95. For other chemically weakened hair try Davines Mellow Anti-Breakage Lustrous Conditioner, £13.40.

✓ Whatever your hair type, always squeeze your hair dry with a towel, don't rub it, as this can lead to more damage.

✓ Give your hair a break from all heated appliances for at least a week.

✓ If your hair's in very bad condition then it's best to go for a good trim.





Match your hairstyle and your hair colour

Changed your hairstyle? 'Particular types of colouring techniques work on certain hairstyles, so you may have to alter your hair colour to match your cut,' says Vivica Davies. Block hair colours or an all-over shade look great on a strong haircut, like a sharp bob, as they enhance shine and strength of cut. If your hair is layered, highlights are good as they add texture and movement to the layers. If you've got a sleek, one-length cut, enhance volume in your hair with a lighter shade.

CHANGE YOUR COLOUR...

'A great-looking hair colour isn't about what's in fashion but about what suits your skintone, eye colour and even your hairstyle,' says Vivica Davies. The easiest way to choose is to think about the colours that suit you best in clothing.

- ◆ Do you look good in red, orange, golden yellow, olive green? You'll suit warm hair tones such as golden blonde, golden brown, strawberry blonde and auburn.
- ◆ If you often wear pillar-box red, fuchsia, black, royal blue or emerald green then platinum, ash blonde, ash brown, burgundy and jet black will look great.
- ◆ Do you have a lot of berry red, purple, charcoal grey or teal in your wardrobe? Then go for neutral tones of creamy blonde, chocolate brown and mahogany.

Three commandments of hair colour

1 Going grey? 'Have a mix of highlights and lowlights,' suggests Vivica. It enhances your changing hair colour instead of disguising it and also means that re-growth will be less noticeable. Try **McAdam Blonde Highlight Enhancing Conditioner**, £2.40.

2 Think about the time you want to spend on your hair. The further from your natural colour you go, the more work your hair requires. Use **Clairol Root Touch-Up**, £4.29, between appointments.

3 If you have to wear more make-up than before, then your hair colour isn't right. When it works well, your skintone comes alive. Test out colours first with **Wella Shaders & Toners**, 99p.



Bye-bye tired looks... hello amazing skin!

Feel you never get enough sleep? Then these easy tricks and clever products will keep you looking fresh and wide-awake...

Maximise your beauty sleep

A good night's sleep means you'll look a whole lot better the next morning, but sometimes that's easier said than done! Make the most of the sleep you do get with these handy bedtime tricks...

DON'T EXERCISE TOO LATE

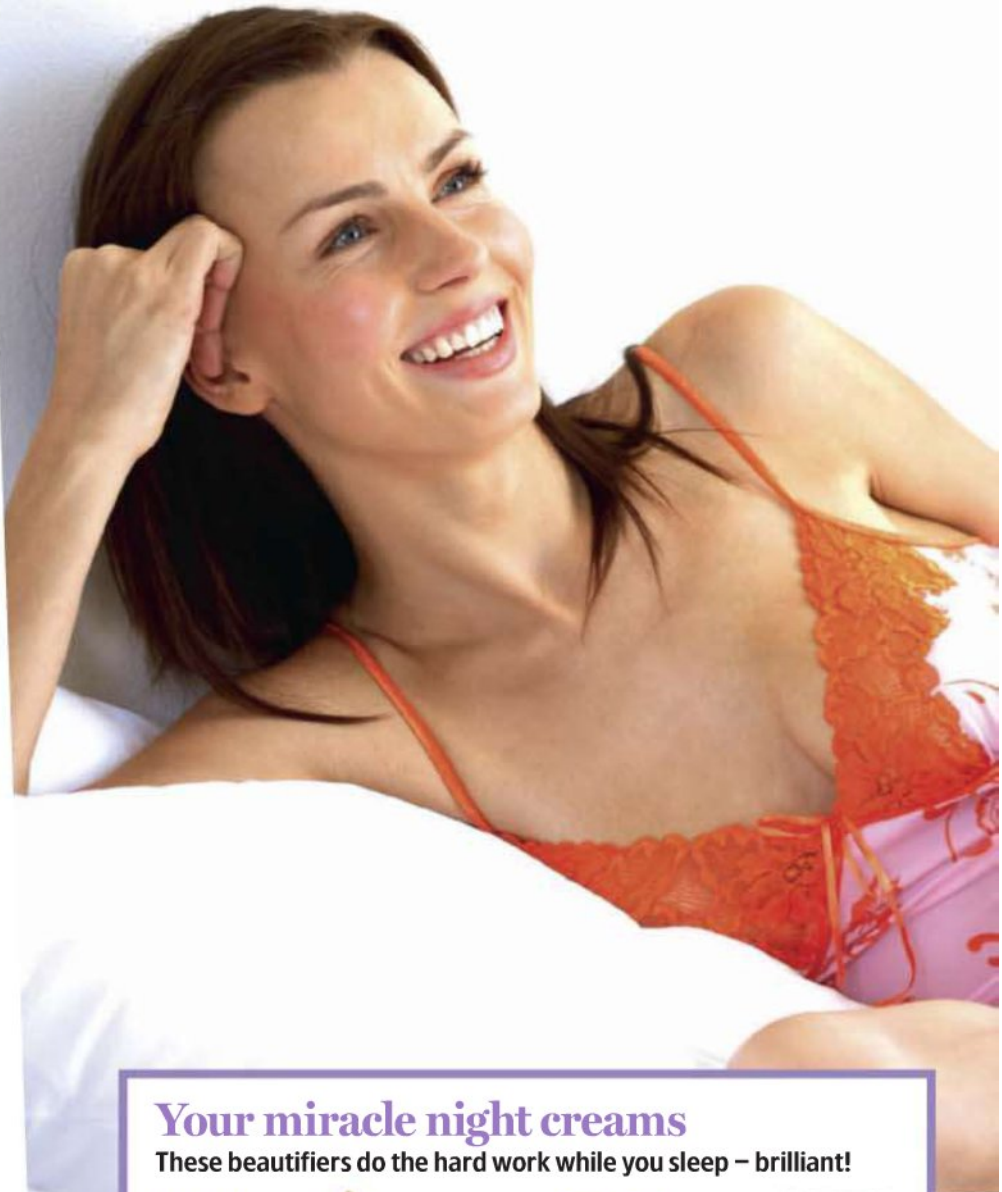
Going to the gym close to bedtime increases adrenalin in your body, which will make it harder for you to get to sleep. You'll find it more beneficial to exercise in the morning or just after you've finished work as your body will have a chance to wind down before bed.

CHILL OUT IN A SOOTHING BATH

Bathing at least an hour before you go to bed releases melatonin, which is the chemical that makes you feel sleepy. Relaxing essential oils like lavender, camomile or rose, will relax your body ready for sleep. **WE LOVE Crabtree & Evelyn Aroma therapy Distillations Relaxing Essential Oil Blend, £10.**

TAKE BEAUTY BOOSTING VITAMINS

Taking vitamins C and E will help the natural collagen production, which makes your skin look plump and healthy. The body produces new collagen while we sleep, so it makes sense to take your vitamin a few hours before bedtime.



Your miracle night creams

These beautifiers do the hard work while you sleep – brilliant!

Nourish dry skin

If your skin is feeling dry and tight, apply a generous layer of Estée Lauder Hydrationist Maximum Moisture Crème, £32, before bed and you'll wake with skin that looks like it's been injected with moisture.



tip Massage facial oil into damp skin before you moisturise for an extra nourishing boost.

Blitz those spots

Eliminate the appearance of spots in as little as 8 hours with Skin Doctors Overnight Zit Zapper, £11.28. It exfoliates and unclogs pores, dries out those annoying spots and calms inflammation... wow!

tip In an emergency, apply some whitening toothpaste to a spot and the bleaching agents will help reduce inflammation.



Even-out pigmentation

Goodbye brown spots and uneven skintone! Once you've cleansed your skin before you go to bed, apply Alpha H White Gold, £33 – you don't even have to add a moisturiser on top as it will only stop the treatment being so intense. Your skin will look brighter and more glowy after one use, but after a few weeks those brown spots will start to fade, too.



Plump out fine lines

The lovely buttery texture of Clinique Repairwear Lift Night, £34, just melts into your skin and plumps up lines and wrinkles as you apply it. After a few hours' sleep, the results are even better!



It's easy to look well-rested and glam... but shhh, keep it to yourself, you don't want everyone looking a picture of health!

tip Wake up your skin with a gentle facial massage to encourage blood flow and oxygen to the surface of the skin. You can even do it as you apply your day cream – just apply in circular movements, finishing off with a very gentle pinching action all over your face to give your skin a lovely pink glow.

The know-how you need to get wide-awake eyes

Perk up tired eyes when you have that 'morning-after-the-night-before' look with these puff-fighting remedies...

The CHEAP trick

Squeeze out two used tea bags and pop them in the fridge for about 30 mins. Put them



over your eyes, lie back and relax for ten minutes. The combination of cool and caffeine will depuff eye bags.

The FAST fix

Sounds odd, but apply just a small amount of haemorrhoid cream under your eyes! It contains fast-acting



anti-inflammatory agents and can help alleviate puffy eyes super-quick. **TRY** Nelsons H+Care Haemorrhoid Cream, £4.35.

The HANDY gadget

TRY Garnier Caffeine Anti-Dark Circles 2-in-1 Roll-On, £9.99, which uses a cooling, massaging roller-ball to refresh and eliminate puffy eyes as well as having a tinted formula, enriched with caffeine to cover dark circles and tone and tighten your skin.



The SPA secret

Help drain excess fluid from your eye area by applying your eye cream like the experts, using light tapping motions with the tips of your fingers. Start from the inner corner of your eye and gently tap outwards along your upper and lower socket line.

Easy make-up tricks

Had a bad night's sleep? Don't let tired skin give the game away. Hiding dark circles and grey-looking skin under a thick layer of foundation will only accentuate how tired you look. Opt for light-reflecting dewy make-up instead...

Prime Skin that hasn't had enough sleep can look dry and uneven. Using a primer under your foundation helps illuminate and plump out your skin for a fresher, healthier glow. **TRY** Virgin Vie Prime Time Face Primer, £12.

Brighten Tired skin usually looks dull, dull, dull! Use a dewy textured foundation – it'll glide over lines and give your skin a lovely healthy sheen. **TRY** 17 Hide & Chic Anti-Fatigue Foundation, £5.99, which contains guarana, a herbal caffeine extract to give your complexion a boost!

Whiten When you're tired, your eyes can look red and bloodshot, but using a plum-coloured eyeliner will brighten the whites, giving you a more wide-awake effect. **TRY** Urban Decay 24/7 Glide-on Eye Pencil in Crash, £9 – apply it to your upper lashline and blend with a cotton bud.

Banish If you're feeling tired, get rid of the black mascara. Black lashes can look too heavy, cast shadows under your eyes and accentuate those dark circles! Brown is softer and more flattering. **TRY** Prestige My Longest Lashes Pro Lengthening Mascara, £6.49.



New Sure natural minerals

(48h) protection that allows skin to breathe



- ✓ 48 hour protection.
- ✓ Contains a naturally absorbent mineral.
- ✓ Non-stop protection that allows skin to breathe.

Dare to join forces with nature



What's worth it?

'You get what you pay for' isn't always true when buying beauty supplies, so spend your money wisely on a mix of luxe and budget goodies...

SPEND A LITTLE...

1 On-trend manicure

At just £2.50 each, you can afford to buy these Marks & Spencer Nail Colours in every delicious rainbow shade.

2 Luxury haircare, supermarket prices...

Pro products to pick up while you're doing your weekly food shop. Try Andrew Collinge Moisturise & Protect Salon Shampoo and Conditioner, £4.99 each, which will leave even the driest Brillo-pad hair smoother and shinier.

3 Luscious lips The packaging on Max Factor Vibrant Curve Effect Lip Gloss, £7.99, may not look particularly luxe but the formula, with a teeny touch of glitter, is top notch. **We've got a set of four glosses to give away – just turn to page 131 and tick ESSTREAT1 07.**

4 The ultimate moisturiser Eucerin Aquaporin Active Moisturising Cream's innovative skin-hydrating technology is a first – it helps increase the transfer of water inside and outside of the cells to leave your skin super-moisturised and radiant. At just £12.99 we can't rave about it enough.

5 Head-to-toe cream

Steam Cream, £10, is for your face, body and hands and is gentle enough to use on the most sensitive of skin. We love its fresh-spa-y smell... oh, and the dinky tin that fits into the smallest bag!

6 So gentle eye make-up remover Our obsession with mascara means we're always on the hunt for the perfect eye make-up remover that doesn't sting or irritate. And now we've found it with Rituals Awareness Mild & Effective Eye Make-up Remover, £9.90 – it gently melts away even the most stubborn eye make-up... yippee.

7 Protect your locks... perfect that style If you're fond of using heated appliances to style your hair then give it a helping hand with the brilliant-value Wellaflex Silvikrin Heat Creations Blow Dry Spray, £2.79. Not only will it protect your hair from damage, it'll help your style stay put, too.

8 Flutter those lashes! If you've always wanted sexy, dramatic eyes, then you need Maybelline The Falsies Volum' Express Mascara, £8.99. The intense black pigment and flake-free formula really will create a wow result.

SPEND A BIT MORE...

1 Your must-have lipplie

Some things are just worth splashing out on – Chanel Lipsticks are eternally chic and we think Rouge Allure in Délicieuse, £22, is the perfect shade for a fresh spring-time pout.

2 Get a gorgeous glow

We've been using Origins Brighter By Nature peel pads, £28, twice a week and our skin has never looked fresher and more glowy. Better yet, they're ultra gentle on sensitive skin.

3 Sumptuous skin softener

L'Occitane Body Lotion with Organic Olive Tree Extracts, £17.50, has a gorgeously fresh, summery scent and the silky soft way it moisturises our legs is even better!

4 Amazing skin protector

We've discovered Nia24 Sun Damage Prevention 100% Mineral Sunscreen SPF30, £37 (from Space NK stores), which even though it's a mineral sunscreen, has a lovely velvety texture and doesn't leave skin with a white mask-like finish. Definitely a winner!

5 Gold-star serum

We love love all Alpha-H products, but the Liquid Gold Daily Poly-Oxidant Complex, £39, is a gel-serum that's our current fave. It lifts and plumps the skin and protects from free-radical damage, too – just what you need as the sun's rays start to hot up.

6 Goodbye crow's feet

Wrinkles round your eyes are one of the first places to give away your age, but use Estée Lauder Time Zone Anti-Line/Wrinkle Eye Creme, £32, for at least four weeks and those pesky lines will look a darn sight better!

7 For lustrous locks

It's a big fave with the A-List set and now we've tried Moroccan oil we're addicted, too! It contains argan oil, which is used for its deeply nourishing properties, but we've only seen it in skincare before now. Try Moroccan oil Intense Hydrating Mask, £22.85 – it will restore the shine and condition to the most damaged locks.

8 Fab face cream

We adore the Green & Spring skincare line for its cute packaging, organic blends and yummy fragrances, but the Nourishing Day Moisturiser, £34, currently tops our fave list. Dry skin literally drinks it up, leaving you looking and feeling as good as if you've just had a salon facial.

WIN with essentials

FEATURE: SARAH COOPER-WHITE. PHOTOS: MASTERPIECE

For stockists, see page 131

MORE TEETH ARE LOST TO GUM DISEASE THAN TOOTH DECAY



It's an astonishing fact. Gum disease, rather than tooth decay, is the single biggest cause of tooth loss. And here's another surprise: 90% of people in the UK will suffer from gum disease at some point in their life. With over 30 years expertise, Corsodyl is a brand renowned for its gum care range. A range specially formulated to help treat and prevent gum disease for healthy teeth and gums.

DISCOVER MORE ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN FOR HEALTHY GUMS AT GUMSMART.CO.UK

Corsodyl Mint Mouthwash contains chlorhexidine digluconate. Always read the label.

CORSODYL is a registered trade mark of the GlaxoSmithKline group of companies.

The latest ways to cleanse your skin

Move over wipes! I'm a big fan of these two new cleansing gizmos...

THE SCRUBLET: L'Oréal Paris has invented an ingenious little device called the Scrublet, which comes with Perfect Clean Foaming Wash, £4.99. Just pour some cleanser onto the Scrublet and massage your wet face. Rubber bristles gently give a deep-down clean. Result? More refined pores and clearer skin.



THE MASSAGER: Neutrogena Wave Duo, £9.99, including 14 cleansing pads, is an update on the original Wave. Two speed settings either gently massage or deeply vibrate, depending on the kind of treatment you want. Both help boost circulation leaving your skin glowing and radiant.



Beauty secrets



Beauty editor Sarah Cooper-White reveals all the new trends, tricks & buys

Luscious lips

I'm loving the fab new juicy **Revlon Super Lustrous Lipglosses**, £6.49. They give a nod to this season's trend for bold lips, but are more wearable than bright lipstick – they stay put longer than your average lipgloss, too!



YOUR NEW SUMMER SCENT!

Pack away those sultry wintertime fragrances and inject a little bit of sunshine into your day with **ckin2U Heat Eau de Toilette**, £29 for 100ml. It's fresh and fruity with a mix of guava, raspberry, jasmine and magnolia.



Skincare for hair...

...that's how guru-hairstylist Charles Worthington wants us to use his new **Dream Hair** range. Just as you cleanse, tone and moisturise your skin, it lets you pamper your hair in the same way. I can't get enough of Miraculously Moisturising Hair Masque and Liberate the Lustre Shine Spritz, £5.49 each – my hair has never been so beautifully bouncy!



The magic of minerals

One of the best-selling foundation brands in the US, **bareMinerals SPF15 Foundation**, £22, has arrived in the UK. I usually go for a liquid base, but really like the dewy sheen you get from the pure-formula mineral powder.



NEWS FLASH!

Blitz your body in time for the beach!

Toning up for the bikini season? Combine your exercise regime with Caudalie Contouring Concentrate, £25.50, which contains essential oils like geranium, lemon and rosemary to help tone skin and boost circulation. Just massage in circular sweeps on damp skin. Buy it from Boots stores nationwide and get this fab free massage roller.



'The secret we need to start talking about'

The taboo associated with mental illness means people are often slow to seek help. These four women's stories show why we should all be more open

As many as one in four people in the UK are affected by mental health. Years ago, their problems would have been swept under the carpet, the stigma attached to them often the sufferer's greatest fear.

But thanks to charities like Mind and Sane, who are committed to helping people with conditions like depression, schizophrenia and obsession, we are better at talking about and understanding mental health issues. These four women have had first-hand experience and want to share their journey so others can see there's light at the end of what can seem a long, dark tunnel.

POSTNATAL
DEPRESSION
(PND)

'I just had no interest in me... or my future'

Sasha Mann, 34, a PA, lives in Winchmore Hill, London, with husband David, 44, and daughters Izzy, 2, and 8-month-old Holly.

I was so excited about having a baby. I loved my changing shape and couldn't wait to give birth in a pool scented with lavender oil. Sadly, that didn't happen. After over 36 hours' labour, I had an emergency Caesarean. I was disappointed, but felt lucky to have a beautiful daughter, Izzy.

Within days, though, the baby blues kicked in – I couldn't sleep and, by my six-week check, was very low and felt unable to cope. I didn't say anything – it seemed ungrateful when I had everything I'd ever dreamed of.

But after that things got worse. Apart from Izzy, who was my beacon of light, I felt I was in a sea of black nothingness. I became aggressive towards my husband, David. I'd fly off the handle at nothing – I even told him I wanted to kill him.

Then one day, in September 2007, I couldn't physically take Izzy to the baby clinic. I just sat in my pyjamas, sobbing. David insisted I went to see my GP and the relief of being diagnosed with PND and being told it wasn't my fault was like having a weight lifted. My GP said it was caused by a lack of the hormone serotonin and prescribed citalopram. Slowly, I noticed little improvements. By January 2008, I was feeling much better, and by March I was off the medication.

When I got pregnant with Holly, I convinced myself that this time I'd be fine. Sadly, I was wrong. When Holly was five weeks old, in October 2009, the insomnia returned, I lost my appetite and I felt that ball of anger inside me.

I'm taking citalopram again and starting to feel more like my old self. David's been amazing and my GP is so kind. Older family members, though – like so many of their generation – hold the opinion I should 'buck up and get on with it'. But PND's not like that; it's not your fault and you can't control it. I'd urge other women suffering to get help. There's no shame in wanting to be well, happy and able to enjoy your baby.

For help and information, log on to pni.org.uk.

With help, Sasha's putting the bleak days of postnatal depression behind her and loving being Mum to Holly (below) and Izzy.



YOUR FIVE-A-DAY TO GOOD MENTAL WELL-BEING!

Connect Developing relationships with family, friends and colleagues will enrich your life and bring you support.

Be active Sports and hobbies such as gardening or dancing, or just a daily stroll, will make you feel good and maintain mobility and fitness.

Be curious Noting the beauty of everyday moments as well as the unusual, and reflecting on them, helps you to appreciate what matters to you.

Learn Fixing a bike, taking up an instrument, cooking – the challenge and satisfaction bring a sense of fun and confidence.

Give Helping friends and strangers links your happiness to a wider community and is an extremely rewarding experience.

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER (OCD)

Talking to others is like a sort of therapy for me'

Barbara Trousdale, 46, lives on the Wirral, Merseyside. She's married to David, 55.

I want people to understand what living with OCD is like and to accept it and my behaviour. My life is dominated by rituals: I even have to close the curtains or go to the loo a certain way. I clean the bath before I get in, wash a certain way, then clean it again afterwards. I wash my hands between putting on clothes. I can't cook because I don't trust myself to do it properly. I worry all the time that something I do will lead to something awful happening to someone I love.

Before I go to sleep, I go through an exhaustive routine of checking my room is just how I want it and all electrical appliances are turned off. As soon as I wake, I start it again and it's mid-morning before my day begins. Most of the time, I'm housebound as these rituals take up so much time. Sometimes I hit my legs to try and break the pattern of obsessive thoughts, but I just end up sore and bruised.

I showed signs of OCD as a young child. I didn't like having friends to play in case they messed up my toys. At school I worried about keeping my books pristine and losing a piece of homework. Then, as my O levels approached, I started making lists, scared I'd miss a vital piece of revision, and I shunned a social life for study.

Soon I was keeping lists of everyday actions like 'tidy room, wash hair, brush teeth' and checking and re-checking

Meeting fellow sufferers through support groups helps Barbara cope with OCD.



them. I knew it wasn't right. Mum was concerned, too. Eventually, at 17, I saw a doctor, who diagnosed OCD.

I tried to live a 'normal' life, but in 1989 I had to give up work because my need to check and re-check everything I do made me slow. I married David in 1993 and he's been so understanding, but having your wife constantly asking if you've washed your hands must be undermining and he can get exasperated with me. David's first wife died from cancer, so I helped raise their daughters. It was hard because I'm paranoid about germs and illness. I couldn't even hug my mum in her dying days because I was so afraid of what she might pass on. She understood, but it was heartbreaking.

Over the years, I've taken endless medication, seen psychiatrists and had cognitive behavioural therapy but, for me at least, they haven't helped much. The one thing I have found helpful is talking to others like me at OCD Action support groups. Knowing someone else understands how tired, isolated and sad I feel really helps.

For help, see ocdaction.org.uk or call 0845 390 6232.

BIPOLAR DISORDER

'My life was a roller coaster of highs and lows'

Siobhan O'Neill, 46, is single and lives in Roehampton, London. She volunteers for the mental health charity Mind and has an 18-year-old son.

There have been times I've seemed the life and soul; I'd work all day and play all night. Then I'd crash and burn, a pain so all-encompassing I couldn't get up for a week. That's what life with untreated bipolar disorder is like: maniacal highs followed by deep lows.

I've been that way for decades, but wasn't diagnosed until seven years ago. At college, for example, I'd throw myself into an assignment, working through the night and getting cross when others wouldn't. Then I'd sleep for days, unable to function. I couldn't do anything by halves, and when an intense relationship ended, I took an overdose. Everyone thought I was just an over-emotional teenager.

When I met my son's dad, I moved to London and became pregnant in 1991. When our son was 2, however, the relationship failed and I had what was termed a breakdown. I had counselling and was put on old-style antidepressants that left me with twitching limbs, so I came off them.

Then, in 2002, someone at work said something I interpreted as 'you're not good enough'. I went home and

curled into a ball of the bleakest depression I'd known. But at the back of my mind I sensed it was more than that. I asked to see a specialist and was finally diagnosed. Being told I had bipolar disorder was a bitter pill. I needed a name for my behaviour, but didn't want the stigma of mental health.

It's taken a series of small steps to get to where I am today. I take antidepressants and a mood stabiliser, and I'd love to get back into paid employment, but for now I do voluntary work. I'm involved in Mind and Rethink's 'Time to Change' campaign to combat mental health discrimination. Things are getting better, but we've got a way to go. If we stop whispering in corners and start to talk about it openly, we'll get there.

For more information, visit mind.org.uk and rethink.org.



Siobhan's diagnosis was a turning point and she hasn't looked back.

DEPRESSION

'At last, it made sense: I wasn't mad or weak – I was ill'

Linda Jones, 41, runs a media agency with partner, Neil Aitchison, also 41. They have twins, Emily and Melissa, 11, and live in Cannock, Staffordshire.

I had my first taste of depression at university. I'd been feeling low and had no energy so I went to see my GP, who prescribed Prozac. I walked out of the surgery and ripped up the prescription, thinking anyone with mental illness was weak.

After university, I threw myself into my job and didn't dwell on how I felt, even though some weekends I was so low I didn't get out of bed.

I met Neil, had the girls and was happy, but still had what I called my 'black days'. No one suspected depression; I always managed to pick myself up and start the next day. But by September 2007, just before the girls' 9th birthday, I'd started to feel increasingly out of control. I was so busy, I'd have to work

after the children went to bed and the thought of organising their birthday on top tipped me over the edge.

Instead of the odd black moment, I was constantly in despair. I was tearful and felt worthless. Then one night, sobbing uncontrollably, I told Neil I wanted to jump out of the window and die. He said he and the girls loved me too much to let me do that. We knew I had to see someone, so I went to my GP. I was in tears at the thought of the diagnosis I was about to get, but I was given a proper explanation of what depression is: a chemical imbalance. At last, it made sense: I wasn't mad or weak – I was ill. My GP gave me sertraline, reassuring me that it was just a medicine.

After three months, I told my GP I wanted to try to go it alone. I still have low days, but I'm OK, and I've stopped burning the candle at both ends. It pains me to know that others suffer in silence because of the ridiculous stigma so many of us still attach to mental health issues. It's an illness and you need help to get better.

Read the *Breaking the Silence* blog at passionatemediaco.uk/speakingup.

The Mental Health Foundation produces a wide range of publications, including some excellent information booklets on many different mental health problems. For details, see mentalhealth.org.uk or call the customer services line on 020 7803 1101.



Learning to make time for herself has been key to Linda's recovery from depression.

FEATURE: ALISON PALMER. PHOTOS: HELEN MARSDEN. STYLING: LINDSEY BAKER. HAIR & MAKE-UP: LAURENCE CLOSE AND JULIA B. SASHA WEARS: TOP; M&S. BARBARA WEARS: DRESS; GREAT PLAINS. CARDIGAN: M&S. SIQBHAN WEARS: DRESS; CC. LINDA WEARS: TOP; WINDSMOOR.



Remember the symptoms

Persistent tummy pain

Increased tummy size

Persistent bloating

Difficulty eating

Feeling full quickly

Every year, 6,600 women are
diagnosed with ovarian cancer.

If caught early, treatment
can be very successful.

If you experience any of these
symptoms on most days, get
yourself checked by your GP.
It's very unlikely that they are
caused by a serious problem,
but it's best to be sure.

For more information or to show
your support, call 0300 456 4700
or visit us online at
ovariancanceraction.org.uk

 **Ovarian**
cancer action

funding research | raising awareness | giving a voice

Proudly supported by

 **Royal College of
General Practitioners**

Photography by Lorenzo Agius.
Registered charity no. 1109743

100 amazingly easy ways to save 100 calories

You don't have to drastically change your diet to drop the calories, these simple everyday steps ensure you eat smarter and still enjoy your food...

Don't blow it in the morning

◆ Sit down to eat breakfast. Research shows we eat 100 calories less the rest of the day if we do.



◆ Use a tablespoon of fruit jam instead of butter.

◆ Poached egg on wholemeal toast instead of scrambled, saves 120 calories.

◆ Cut down the average 1½ tablespoons of butter spread on your toast.

◆ Add berries instead of sugar to your cereal for sweetness.

◆ For breakfast, blend one banana, 150ml fat-free milk and a spoonful of Manuka honey. Potassium from the banana helps lower your stress levels.

◆ Egg white omelettes are the celebrity dieter's staple. Add in tomatoes, mushrooms and chives. Visit twochicks.co.uk.

◆ Swap your croissant and milky coffee for a toasted crumpet with a teaspoon of honey and tea with skimmed milk.

◆ Have egg and soldiers (no butter), and put pepper on your egg, not salt.

◆ Swap full-fat yogurt for fat-free. Try Yeo Valley as it has no added sugar.

◆ A smaller cereal bowl can reduce your serving to 75g, instead of 100g.

Avoid the munchies at lunchtime

◆ Remove cheese from your sandwich for an instant calorie cut.

◆ Try using a tablespoon of low-fat cheese spread instead of full-fat hard cheese.

◆ Pack a wholewheat pitta with 1 slice of turkey, ¼ avocado, a handful of lettuce and 1 sliced tomato and you won't miss your dairy indulgence.

◆ Eat your bagel with smoked salmon, low-fat cream cheese and rocket for a scrumptious lunch.

◆ Use lemon juice instead of mayo or dressing.

◆ Spread a thin layer of mustard for extra punch – you won't miss a cheese topping.

◆ Eat two courses: Pennsylvania University research found that people who had a salad starter ate 12% fewer calories overall in their meal than those who only had a main course.

◆ Top a salad with crisp veg – it's crunch without the cals of croutons.

◆ Avoid croutons, they add 122 extra calories.

◆ Ask for dressing to be left on the side. A tablespoon contains about 100 calories.

◆ Use balsamic instead of dressing – it's virtually fat-free.



◆ Replace 100g of Cheddar on your salad with 100g of feta (half a standard pack) and save a whopping 150 calories.

◆ Choose a 150ml serving of tomato or veg soup rather than cream varieties. You'll save enough calories to add a small wholemeal roll.

◆ Skim the fat off your soup.

◆ At the sushi bar avoid teriyaki chicken and California rolls.

◆ For a calorie-busting lunch, feast on miso soup, edamame beans and a serving of sushi mini rolls.

◆ Switch a prawn mayo sandwich for four oatcakes with tomato salsa and cooked prawns.

◆ Just eat one half of bagel, not both.

◆ Pack your own lunch, so there are no hidden fatty extras.

Guilt-free snacks

◆ Crisps are moreish but fattening. Try Ryvita Minis and save around 100 calories per bag.

◆ Swap dry-roasted peanuts for a handful of macadamia nuts.

◆ Liz Hurley swears by the weight-loss powers of beef jerky. At 142 calories per 25g pack, it's almost half that of a hamburger. Visit myprotein.co.uk.

◆ Savour two squares of dark organic chocolate rather than scoff an entire milk bar.





Zip-a-dee-doo-dah!
Just a little
extra effort
and it does
up easily

- ◆ **Dip into salsa with carrot or celery sticks, instead of corn chips.**
- ◆ If you're indulging in crisps, don't munch from the bag. Put them in a small bowl – you'll eat just 150g instead of a likely 500g.
- ◆ Low-fat yogurt is a tasty dip alternative.
- ◆ **Add coriander to low-fat yogurt and dip a couple of mini wholemeal pittas or crudité's instead of crisps and dips.**
- ◆ If you work in an office, ensure you always have fruit with you to fill you up – that way you're less likely to reach for the cakes and chocs that go round.

Go easy on takeaways

- ◆ Have battered cod instead of plaice.
- ◆ **Add a side serving of mushy peas instead of a saveloy.**
- ◆ If you must have chips, have a small portion.
- ◆ **Swap a Big Mac for a cheeseburger.**
- ◆ Order tandoori chicken instead of a korma.
- ◆ **Remove the bun from your hamburger.**
- ◆ A 100g serving of white rice has a quarter less calories than fried rice.
- ◆ **Steamed rice has the least calories.**
- ◆ Have steamed spinach with curry, not a potato dish.



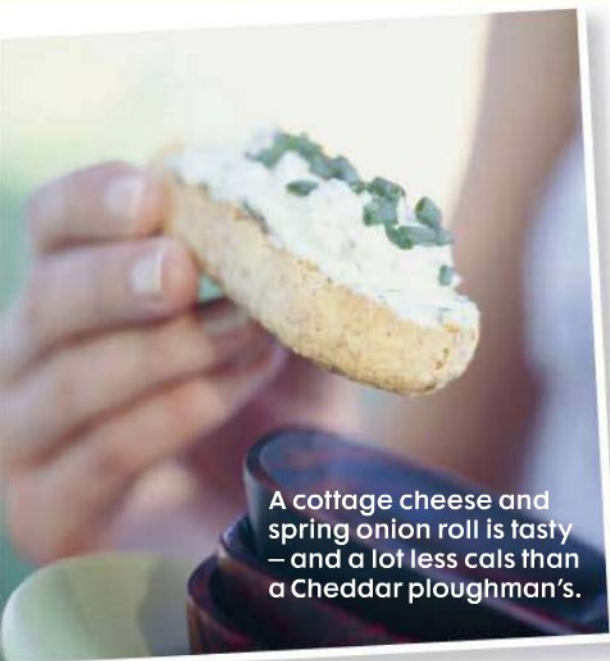
Don't pig out at dinnertime

- ◆ Reduced-fat coconut milk in a Thai green chicken curry saves 200 calories.
- ◆ **'Instead of deep-frying lemon chicken, steam it. Make a sauce with juice of 2 lemons, 2 teaspoons of sugar, soy sauce and a pinch of dried chillies,' suggests nutritionist Beverley Glock (splatcooking.net).**
- ◆ Swap pepperoni on pizza for 75g grilled, skinless chicken.
- ◆ 'A portion of roast turkey or chicken with skin on has 5.8g fat,' says weight loss expert Caroline Deakin. 'Bin the skin and save 50% calories and fat.'
- ◆ **Ask for half the usual amount of cheese topping on your pizza.**
- ◆ Make your own pizza!
- ◆ **Pick your pasta. 100g spaghetti contains 150 less calories than 100g tagliatelle.**
- ◆ Choose the new WeightWatchers variety of Chicken and Mushroom Pie (200g). At 302 calories it's around 50% less than other full-fat brands.



- ◆ Trim the fat from your meat before cooking to save about 150 calories per portion.
- ◆ **Cook with a leaner cut of meat to save up to 500 calories overall.**
- ◆ A 100g sirloin steak is 270 calories while the same amount of turkey breast steak is 155 calories.
- ◆ **Have pud just twice a week – you'll appreciate it more.**

- ◆ Go veggie – have lentil Bolognese.
- ◆ **Replace roast spuds with steamed sweet potatoes.**



A cottage cheese and spring onion roll is tasty – and a lot less cal than a Cheddar ploughman's.

Enjoy not-so-naughty treats

- ◆ Scoop up WeightWatchers Chocolate Brownie Luxury Iced Desserts instead of Ben & Jerry's Chocolate Fudge Brownie Ice Cream and save 114 calories.
- ◆ Feast on fresh fruit after dinner, instead of ice cream.
- ◆ **Enjoy a sweet tablespoon of fat-free yogurt or half-fat crème fraîche on your pud instead of cream.**
- ◆ Choose ice cream in a cup instead of a cone.
- ◆ **'Eat low-cal popsicles [ice-lollies] if you need something sweet,' says food blogger Libby Andrews (ravenouslylibby.com). 'They're only 99 calories each.'**
- ◆ Craving a cupcake? A little one is just as nice as a fat-laden whopper.
- ◆ Try heating and blending berries. Serve with dairy-free custard.
- ◆ Mini-sized muffins mean you save half the number of calories.
- ◆ **Try the unexpected... a dish of strawberries served with balsamic vinegar is delicious (forget the cream).**
- ◆ A serving of sugar-free jelly is sweet and succulent and won't land on your thighs.
- ◆ **Enjoy a slice of apple pie, but leave the buttery, fat-laden crust.**
- ◆ You can eat half as much again of sorbet compared with a scoop of ice cream.

Little lifestyle changes

- ◆ Make sure you get enough sleep. Research has shown that getting at least seven hours' sleep a night helps to control hormones, which trigger food cravings.
- ◆ **Eat slowly and always sit down at the table.**
- ◆ Use smaller bowls and plates. Your plate will still be full so you won't feel deprived.
- ◆ Use non-stick pans instead of lots of oil – it's an easy way to cut 100 calories, as is using an olive oil spray like Filippo Berio's.
- ◆ **Drink a glass of water at least 20 minutes before dinner to feel full.**
- ◆ Remember that thirst can disguise itself as hunger. Drink a glass of water before reaching for the biscuit tin.
- ◆ Have one biscuit instead of three – savour it, don't scoff!
- ◆ **A sliver of cake is just as satisfying to your tummy as a large slice.**

Swap your swimming-pool-sized wine glass (around 360ml) for a 125ml goblet.



Best drinks choices

- ◆ A can of fizzy drink contains more than 150 calories. Swap for a sugar-free one or drink water with a dash of lemon juice.
- ◆ Swap your morning cappuccino for an espresso hit instead.
- ◆ If you can't bear to go without your milky coffee, use low-fat milk and cut the sugar.
- ◆ **Add cinnamon or nutmeg instead of syrup to your latte.**
- ◆ Learn to love herbal teas – zero calories!
- ◆ A cup of weak black tea is lower on caffeine as well as calories.
- ◆ Enjoy a cup of Earl Grey with lemon for a zero-calorie refreshing treat.
- ◆ **At night, have a mug of hot chocolate – use half low-fat dairy-free Alpro milk and half water, mixed with organic chocolate.**
- ◆ Squeeze your own orange juice. Or try Cranberry Light.
- ◆ **Juice celery, carrot and a little root ginger instead of starchy apples and pears.**
- ◆ Sip your nightly glass of white wine, but pour half as much alcohol and top with soda.
- ◆ **Avoid pints of lager and opt for a vodka and slimline tonic.**
- ◆ Have shandy instead of beer.
- ◆ Spoil yourself with a glass of Champagne instead of a glass of wine.
- ◆ Avoid cocktails like sangria. A glass of rosé will still put you in the party mood.



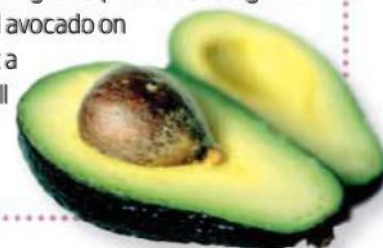
Women like you



'I just cut 100 calories from each meal'

Elizabeth Donovan, 34, a personal assistant, lives in Surrey.

Two years after giving birth, I still hadn't lost the 10lb I'd gained when I was pregnant. I didn't have time to exercise regularly or follow diets. Instead, I cut 100 calories from each meal. I also stopped taking two spoonfuls of sugar in tea and coffee. I replaced mayonnaise with lemon juice and avocado on sandwiches, which actually tastes nicer! After dinner, I'd eat a plate of fruit instead of pudding – so my sweet tooth was still satisfied. Three months on, I'm almost back to my ideal weight of 9½ stone, yet I don't feel I've deprived myself.





A more natural approach, with effective balanced support

Whether you are looking for the ideal beauty supplement, or a formula for the menopause, pregnancy or overall vitality, the **award winning Vitabiotics women's range** offers maximum, effective support from **sensible, balanced formulae, without excessive levels**. With over 35 years experience, no-one understands women's supplements like Vitabiotics.

And A. Beckett

Prof. A. H. Beckett
OBE, PhD, DSc
Professor Emeritus,
University of London



**UK's
No 1**
WELLNESS RANGE
FOR SPECIFIC
LIFE STAGES

The UK's most trusted wellness range for women's health

From Boots, Superdrug, supermarkets, Holland & Barrett, GNC, John Bell & Croyden, Lloydspharmacy, pharmacies, health stores & vitabiotics.com
Vitamin supplements may benefit those with nutritionally inadequate diets.

Working with

Wellbeing of Women

Women's Health Concern

Britain's leading supplements for specific life stages

THE QUEEN'S AWARD FOR ENTERPRISE 2006

VITABIOTICS
WHERE NATURE MEETS SCIENCE

Your body quirks what do they mean?

Our bodies perform amazing feats every day, but they also act in very strange ways. We get to the bottom of that odd behaviour...



What does my twitchy eyelid mean?

This usually happens when you're tired, but that relentless twitch, which is indiscernible to others, is very common. 'It's known as eyelid myokymia,' says Som Prasad, Consultant Ophthalmologist and Clinical Director at Wirral University Teaching Hospital. 'When you're tired, stressed, or have been overdoing the caffeine or alcohol, you may find your upper lid twitches uncontrollably,' says Som.

What to do: Give yourself and your eyes a rest. 'Try to get more sleep, cut down on the alcohol and caffeine and remember to rest your eyes at least every 40 minutes when sitting in front of the computer,' says Som. For on-the-spot relief, try massaging the affected area.

Are pins and needles dangerous?

You know that horrible feeling you get in your leg or arm when you've been leaning on it for too long? 'It's called paresthesia,' says osteopath Danny Williams (thetravellingosteopath.com). 'It's caused by too much pressure on a nerve, which interferes with the signal to your brain, making your arm or leg "fall asleep",' he says. 'The pins and needles is your brain receiving messages, so it's a good thing as it means that blood is flowing back.'

What to do: 'There's a difference between pins and needles and a pinched nerve,' says Danny. If feeling doesn't return quickly, go to your GP, as it may indicate a more serious problem. Otherwise, just give the limb a good **old shake!**

How come my ears pop?

We've all experienced that feeling when a plane descends to land. Your ears become blocked, then suddenly clear with a popping sensation. The reason? 'The ear drum is sensitive to the atmospheric pressure changes that occur when you go in a lift, fly or dive,' explains family GP and

author Dr Carol Cooper. 'The "pop" is the Eustachian tube, connecting your middle ear to the back of your throat opening, letting air flow through.'

What to do: To prevent painful ears when you're flying and the plane begins to descend, suck sweets or chew gum to help



Why do my joints crack?

'Our joints are surrounded by gases,' says chiropractor Tim Hutchful from the British Chiropractic Association (chiropractic-uk.co.uk). Tim explains that when you 'crack' a joint when stretching your fingers backwards, the joint releases gas bubbles, which then 'pop'.

What to do: 'It's not likely you have arthritis just because your joints crack, but if they're painful, visit your GP,' says Tim. Eat enough omega-3, found in oily fish, and drink at least 1.5 litres of water a day to keep your joints lubricated.

Why do we yawn when others do?

You see or hear someone else yawning and, before you know it, you're showing off your fillings as well. 'This spontaneous response shows empathy; an ability to understand and respond to someone else's state of mind,' explains Steve Jones, Professor of Genetics at University College London.

What to do: Try breathing through your nose, keeping your mouth closed and put a strategic hand over your mouth.

you swallow and enable air to flow up the Eustachian tube. Alternatively, take a breath in, and then try to breathe out gently with your mouth closed and pinching your nose (this is called the Valsalva manoeuvre). When you do this, no air is blown out but you are pushing air into the Eustachian tube, which often cures the problem.

What are goosebumps?

When you're cold, scared or nervous, goosebumps, or 'piloerection' to give them their scientific name, appear on your skin. 'Goosebumps happen when the tiny muscle at the base of a body hair contracts, causing the hair to stand on end and a small bump on your skin,' explains Dr Elizabeth Sharp, Clinical Director at ESPH in Harley Street,

London (esph.co.uk). It's the body's response to cold. You might also get goosebumps when listening to music or when you're scared, which evolved as part of the fight-or-flight reaction due to blood rushing to the muscles to give them additional oxygen.

What to do: 'Prevent goosebumps due to cold by rubbing the skin,' says Dr Sharp, 'or slip on a card!'

Can I stop crying over onions?

'When you slice an onion you rupture its cells,' says horticulturalist Stefan Drew (stefandrew.com). 'These release enzymes that produce a gas called propanethial sulfoxide and it's this that stings your eyes.'

What to do: 'Chill an onion in the freezer first,' says Stefan. This slows down the release of the enzymes. 'And slice the root end last, as this has the highest concentration of enzymes.'



'Hiccups are a failed attempt to inhale'

Why do I sneeze in sunlight?

Around 18 to 35% of us sneeze in bright sunlight. 'It's known as the photic sneeze reflex (PSR),' says Dr Ian Campbell, a family GP. 'If you sneeze in sunlight, then one of your parents probably does, too,' he says. It's caused by a change in light intensity, which over-stimulates the optic nerve. This then triggers the trigeminal nerve, which causes sneezing.

What to do: There's not much you can do, although you could try wearing sunglasses.



What are hiccups all about?

Hiccups are a failed attempt to inhale, explains Dr Len Fisher, author of *How to Dunk a Doughnut: The Science of Everyday Life* (£7.99, Phoenix). And they usually occur when we drink too fast or try to eat and breathe at the same time. This makes the diaphragm and chest muscles contract and triggers an involuntary inhalation. The air can't reach the lungs because the muscle spasm has closed off the windpipe. It's this that produces the unmistakable sound of a hiccup.

What to do: Like sneezing, hiccupping is a reflex, so can't easily be controlled – though everyone knows a 'cure'!

BODY MYTHS BUSTED

Not everything you think about your body is true....

MYTH 'If you shave, your hair grows back thicker.'

TRUTH Hair may seem thicker as the blunt end is growing back, but shaving has no effect on your hair's thickness.

MYTH 'Swallowing gum's bad for you.'

TRUTH Your stomach may not be able to break down chewing or bubble gum but nonetheless, it still just passes through you with no side-effects – much the same as sweetcorn does.

MYTH 'Dark skins don't get skin cancer.'

TRUTH Darker skins do have added protection against harmful UV rays and are less likely to burn in the sun than lighter skins but all skin colours suffer from skin cancer.

MYTH You lose most heat through your head.'

TRUTH Researchers at Indiana University in 2008 proved this to be false, but the top of the body is more sensitive to temperature changes.

Calling all mums to be

Prepare your body with an essential balance of vitamins and minerals

Taking an appropriate supplement during pregnancy is essential for you and your baby



The one time you want to feel sure you're doing the very best for your body is when you're planning to have a child. Among vitamins and minerals essential for both mother and baby, folates (also known as folic acid) are particularly important during the first four weeks of pregnancy when the baby's neural tube – which affects spinal and brain

function – is developing. For this reason, it's advisable to take a supplement as soon as you start trying to conceive. Seven Seas Femibion Healthy Pregnancy gives you many of the vital nutrients you need before, during and after pregnancy. Easy to take, even if you're suffering from morning sickness, just one tablet a day will help give your baby the best start in life.

5 tips to enjoying your pregnancy

You've never had a better reason to look after yourself, so make the most of it!



Plan ahead for your little one

- 1 Listen to your body – if you're tired, put your feet up and enjoy chilling out.
- 2 Eat little and often – it's the best way to combat pregnancy sickness.
- 3 Treat your curves to a luxe moisturiser – try one with an uplifting fruity scent.
- 4 Be excited and prepare ahead – buy soft toys and knit cute booties.
- 5 Don't be afraid to ask for a hand when you need it – you'll find most people are extra nice to you when you're pregnant.

A vital nutrient

Femibion Healthy Pregnancy has been created to give you health-boosting nutrients during your pregnancy. It contains Metafolin®, a unique patented form of folate which is much easier for women to absorb than regular folic acid. Other key ingredients include iodine, key B vitamins, omega-3 DHA and vitamins C and E.

FIND OUT MORE

Femibion Healthy Pregnancy is £13.99 from chemists and supermarkets.

New mums will also love Femibion Energetic Mum, £9.99. For details, visit seven-seas.com/femibion



A home test cured all my aches

Judith Saville, 53, had been crippled with arthritis for a decade. Then, one day, she took a simple allergy test...

My knees and hips first began to ache when I was in my early forties. Sometimes I'd get dreadful shooting pains in them. For years I soldiered on, but eventually it got so bad that I went to see my GP.

X-rays pointed to arthritis. Various drugs I took to combat it only led to horrible side effects, such as stomach pain and depression. I even tried invasive steroid injections, but they didn't help and, like many traditional medics, my GP was reluctant to recommend any alternative therapies. It seemed I'd have to live with it, dosing myself up with a cocktail of painkillers.

I'd been an active go-getter who hardly ever stopped working or socialising; now I felt like an old woman. Despite the tablets, I was in almost constant pain. I was no longer able to garden, and even simple household tasks like washing the kitchen floor became impossible, because I couldn't bend or kneel. The pain spread to my ankles and toes.

Soon, even getting to the local hospital where I work as an administrator became too much. I couldn't walk the short distance to get the bus and had to rely on my husband, Mike, and friends to ferry me around. I considered giving up work and if I hadn't had a desk job, I'd almost certainly have had to.

The pain was exhausting and made me feel so down. I never got a good night's sleep as it would constantly wake me. Everything had changed: I couldn't go shopping with my daughter, Katie, now 23, nor could Mike and I go on the walking holidays we used to enjoy. I even refused invitations to lunch with girlfriends because I was afraid we'd park too far from the restaurant and I'd be in more pain by the time we got there. Poor Mike bore the brunt of my frustrations.

By early 2009 I was at my wits' end. Then a friend said she'd heard that food allergies can affect people's

health in odd ways, so had I thought about taking a food intolerance test?

I was so miserable at that point, I'd have tried anything. I scoured the Internet and came across YorkTest (yorktest.com; 0800 074 6185).

I paid £9.99, filled in a detailed form about my problems then had a blood test at my local surgery (for which I paid about £10). I then had to keep a food diary for a month, have another blood test and send everything away. It was really simple and within a fortnight, the results were in. It turned out I was allergic to yeast, egg white and coconut.

Within two weeks of cutting them out, a lot of the swelling in my joints had gone down and the pain had halved. I was able to walk round the supermarket and even go and get the bus. I'd been

taking up to eight doses of painkillers a day but that fell dramatically. And within just a few more weeks I was almost pain- and drug-free.

Today, Mike and I go for long walks in the countryside near where we live in Braintree, Essex, and I can shop 'til I drop!

I do miss bread and pasta, but the wheat-free versions are fine – even Mike and Katie don't mind them. I label-read because you often find egg white hidden in processed food and coconut in yeast-free cakes and biscuits, but it's worth it. I haven't needed to see my GP since taking the test, but I'm angry I've wasted almost a decade of my life.

I've gone from being on the verge of using a walking stick, and possibly facing a future in a wheelchair, to planning a walking holiday in the Lake District – for me, it's nothing short of a miracle!

'I'm now planning a walking holiday in the Lake District – for me, it's a miracle!'



Judith's remarkable recovery has given her a new lease of life.

3 home-testing kits that work

1 Babystart Fertil Check Female Fertility Test (£6.99, babystart.co.uk) reads levels of FSH (a hormone linked to fertility) in your urine. Simple to use – just dip a stick in your pee to discover your fertility level.



2 Blood pressure can rise when you're in the surgery – for obvious reasons – so a device you use at home can give a truer reading. Boots.com has a monitor for £29.99.



3 Chlamydia is a serious STD that can lead to infertility. With Lloydspharmacy.com it costs £30 to register, send a urine sample off and log on to view your results.



Turn your body fantasy into a reality

Whether it's banishing those bingo wings or running a marathon, you'll be inspired by our simple solutions and real-life success story...



Making even small lifestyle changes will be a step in the right direction.

THE FANTASY

To get an hourglass figure

MAKE IT A REALITY

Achieving an hourglass figure is all about creating definition in the right places. You need to sculpt shoulder muscles and target waist muscles to create a nipped-in look.

◆ **FOR YOUR SHOULDERS** From a standing position, hold a weight (a bottle of water) in each hand and bend your arms at shoulder height so they form a 'W' shape. Push the weights straight up above your head, then lower back down to a starting position. Do two sets of 20.

◆ **FOR YOUR WAIST** Lie on the floor and bend your knees in the air at a 90-degree angle. Clasp your hands behind your head with elbows pointing to the sides. Curl forward and try to touch your left elbow to your right knee. Return to centre and repeat on opposite side. Do two sets of 20.



Let's twist again:
with your torso
not your body.

THE FANTASY

To drop a dress size

MAKE IT A REALITY

If you've been stuck in a dieting rut, it's time to get realistic. You can lose weight but you need to work with your genes and be realistic. Pursuing the body of a skinny celeb who inherited the build of a gazelle isn't going to work. So your first port of call should be to visit a website such as weightlossresources.co.uk,

where you'll find your ideal weight for your height and build. Then you need to set about cutting your calorie intake. There's



no need to starve yourself or follow a crash diet, just make some simple changes throughout the course of the day: swap takeaways for healthy meals; choose healthy snacks such as pretzels; and, most importantly, drop portion sizes at every meal. Keep it simple with the exercise, too. Forget the five-day-a-week gym habit and think about some small investments: an effective exercise DVD; a skipping rope; a cheap set of weights and so on. Or commit to walking or running regularly. Change your habits and stick to them and you'll soon look how you want.

THE FANTASY

To have arms like Michelle Obama

MAKE IT A REALITY

It's all about the exercise here, and sticking to it. We've got the inside scoop on the First Lady's routine from her trainer, Cornell McClellan, who tells us that she does these exercises back-to-back, for two to three sets of 15 repetitions to help combat bingo wings. Follow her daily routine and banish that jiggle...



1 Tricep kickbacks: Hold a weight in both hands and bend forward until your torso is at a 45-degree angle or parallel to the floor. Bend your arms and pull elbows up to torso level, then straighten arms behind you, squeezing muscles at the back, then bend arms back to start position.

2 Hammer curls: From a standing position, hold a weight in each hand. Bend your elbow to draw one weight up towards your shoulder, then slowly lower that arm and repeat the exercise on the opposite side.

THE FANTASY

To get back into your pre-baby jeans

MAKE IT A REALITY

Get a flatter tummy without a lot of hard work. Try this Pilates exercise daily and see results in two weeks. Lie on your back, shoulders down. Arms are by your sides, palms down, and knees are bent. Lift head and shoulders off the floor slightly, with your chin tucked down. Lift both arms off the floor and, keeping them straight, pump them up and down no higher than four inches from the floor. Count to five as you inhale, five as you exhale. Repeat this 10 times.

Diet

tip

Banish the bloat by eating early on in the evening and eat potassium-rich foods such as kiwis and sweet potatoes to ease water retention.



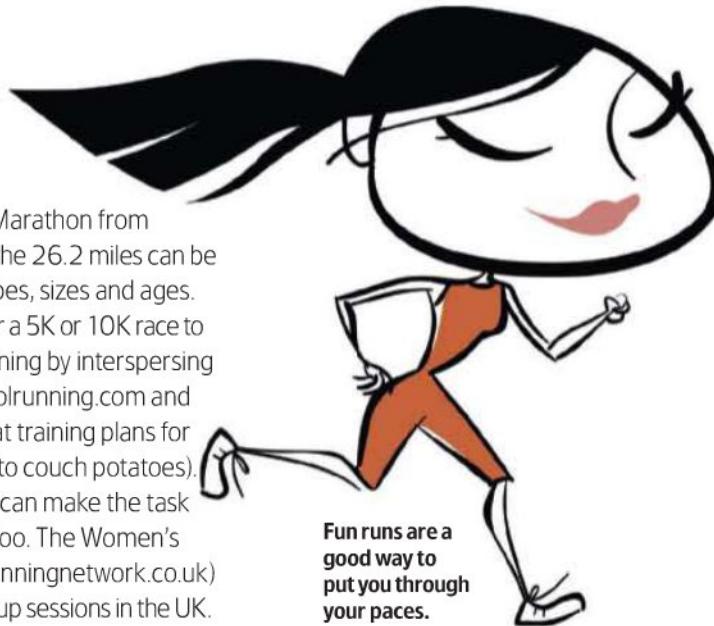
THE FANTASY

To run a marathon

MAKE IT A REALITY

You've watched the London Marathon from your living room so you know the 26.2 miles can be achieved by people of all shapes, sizes and ages.

The key is to start small: Enter a 5K or 10K race to see how you get on. Start training by interspersing jogging with walking (both coolrunning.com and runnersworld.co.uk have great training plans for everyone, from elite athletes to couch potatoes). Joining a local running group can make the task ahead feel far less daunting, too. The Women's Running Network (womensrunningnetwork.co.uk) runs fun, non-competitive group sessions in the UK.



Fun runs are a good way to put you through your paces.

THE FANTASY

To get a pert, firm bum

MAKE IT A REALITY

One of the easiest ways to firm your bottom is to take the stairs. Walking up stairs, two at a time, will give your bottom a great workout. You can squeeze other bottom toners into the day, too: do a set of squats while you brush your teeth, clench your buttocks when in the queue at the supermarket and practise balancing on tiptoes and squeezing your bum while you're washing up.

Cheats

tip

Slendertone's new Bottom Toner (£119.99, slendertone.com) promises to lift and re-shape in as little as four weeks. So if you are breaking out in a cold sweat at the prospect of all that exertion, give yourself a treat this spring.



It worked for me!

'I wanted to get fit and raise others' awareness of cancer'

Sam Boyd is 39 and lives in Hemel Hempstead.

'I lost a friend at 31 to lymphoma, so when my father-in-law was diagnosed with cancer, I decided I wanted to get fit and do something to raise awareness of cancer at the same time. I embarked on a healthy eating plan and regular exercise routine and have now lost over 2st in weight. I've also taken part in two half-marathons and the Race for Life. Thinking of the people that I'd lost, and how incredibly brave they were, gave me the motivation to stay right on track throughout my training.' For more information, visit raceforlife.org or call 0871 641 1111.



Sam's new look is down to regular exercise and a healthy eating plan.

Let's all go on... a spa break!

It's time to plan something lovely just for you – join us on our exclusive spa breaks at Ragdale Hall in Leicestershire and Champneys Forest Mere in Hampshire

We would love to see you all at...



RAGDALE HALL

WHEN?

- ◆ Sun 23 to Tues 25 May
- ◆ Sun 21 to Tues 23 November

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ◆ Refreshments on arrival at 2.30pm.
- ◆ Two nights' accommodation.
- ◆ Breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- ◆ Special Leighton Denny room gift and fabulous Spa Find travel bag, worth £20.
- ◆ Welcome drinks and prize draw.
- ◆ 50-min Natural Harmony Facial.
- ◆ 25-min Back, Shoulder and Neck Massage.
- ◆ An evening with celebrity manicurist Leighton Denny and his team, plus a fab fashion showcase on your second night.
- ◆ 10% voucher to use in the Ragdale Boutique.
- ◆ Full use of all facilities including the amazing Thermal Spa.
- ◆ Luggage storage facilities on your last day until 2pm.

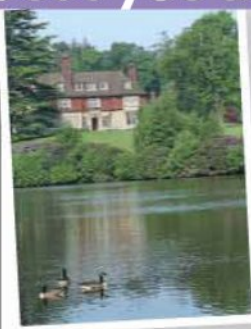


PRICES

are per person based on two people sharing a room and include VAT. Triple rooms are available on request.

Economy room	£256	Standard/Lodge room	£287
Superior room	£308	Single room supplement	£50

TO BOOK Call 01664 433 000 and quote *essentials* magazine.
To take a look at the treatment menu, go to www.ragdalehall.co.uk.



CHAMPNEYS FOREST MERE

WHEN?

- ◆ Sun 4 to Tues 6 July

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ◆ Two nights' accommodation.
- ◆ Breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- ◆ Your special gifts: Luxe Champneys robe and Thai Royale Shower Cream, plus an Elemis skincare set.
- ◆ Welcome drinks and prize draw.
- ◆ 55-min Champneys Body Radiance treatment.
- ◆ 25-min Champneys Facial.
- ◆ An evening with skincare specialists Elemis, plus a style workshop with celebrity make-up artist Lou Page.
- ◆ 10% discount on pre-booked treatments.
- ◆ Full use of all facilities and exercise and relaxation classes.
- ◆ Luggage storage facilities on your last day until 4pm.



PRICES

are per person based on two people sharing a room and include VAT.

Twin room from	£329.95	Single rooms from	£389.95
----------------	---------	-------------------	---------

TO BOOK Call 0843 316 2222 and quote *essentials* offer
or go to www.champneys.com/essentials

10 natural remedies

that really work

With prescription charges and over-the-counter medicine prices ever increasing, it's worth taking a leaf out of our grandmothers' books and considering these natural remedies for common complaints



Mother Nature – and Granny, it seems – has the answer to many health niggles.

1 YOU'VE DEVELOPED A NASTY SPOT

Usual buy Acne gel, such as Freederm, £9.14.

Try instead Grate some cucumber and mash it together to make a pulp. Rub this in and leave for 15 minutes. Rinse and leave it to air-dry. Repeat every evening.

How does it work?

Anti-inflammatory properties in cucumber soothe the skin. Air-drying allows the spot to dry out.



2 TUMMY UPSETS ARE A PROBLEM

Usual buy Anti-diarrhoea, antacid medication such as Pepto Bismol, £3.49.

Try instead Crush 2 cloves of garlic in a bowl, add 2tsp brown sugar and mix into $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of boiled water. Drink two to three times a day.

How does it work?

Garlic has natural properties that kill the bacteria in the gut that cause tummy upsets.

3 YOU SUFFER FROM DANDRUFF

Usual buy Anti-dandruff shampoo, such as Boots' Ketoconazole Shampoo, £7.99 for 100ml.

Try instead Spread live yogurt on your hair, leave it for 30 mins, then rinse.

How does it work?

Dandruff is caused by a build-up of *Pityrosporum orbiculare* – the yeast that feeds on skin oils. Live yogurt contains friendly bacteria that fight this.

4 TOOTHACHE'S A PAIN

Usual buy Anaesthetic gel, such as Orajel Extra Strength Dental Gel, £5.39.

Try instead Put a small piece of onion on the painful tooth or gum for three minutes.

How does it work?

Like garlic, onions have antibacterial properties.

Tip Put honey on a burn. Its antibacterial properties will heal and stop infections getting into the wound.



6 A COLD SORE'S ON THE WAY

Usual buy Antiviral cream, such as Zovirax Cold Sore Cream, £5.99 for 2g tube.

Try instead Dab a ball of cotton wool in vinegar and apply to the affected area at the first sign of a cold sore tingle. Repeat several times a day.

How does it work?

Viruses can't thrive in an acidic environment.

7 YOU'VE GOT EARACHE

Usual buy Drops, such as Earex Ear Drops, £4.29 for 10ml.

Try instead Put warmed olive oil in a dropper and gently drip into the ear to soften excess wax.

How does it work?

Olive oil acts as a lubricant and breaks down wax.



8 CYSTITIS IS A NUISANCE

Usual buy Cystitis remedy, such as Cymalon Cranberry Liquid, £4.35.

Try instead Put 1tsp of lemon juice into a cup of boiling water. Allow to cool and sip often during the day. It will ease the burning sensation and clear up the infection.

How does it work?

The lemon's acidity fights the bacteria that normally live in your bowel but can cause inflammation once they get into the urethra.

9 A TOUCH OF SUNBURN

Usual buy Soothing gel, such as Afterburn Sunburn Rescue, £9.99 for 75g.

Try instead Soak several sheets of kitchen paper in white or cider vinegar and put it on the affected area for as long as you like.

How does it work?

Vinegar reduces the inflammation and pain associated with sunburn. Alternatively, put slices of cucumber on the burned areas.

10 NEED TO EASE INDIGESTION

Usual buy Antacid relief, such as Tums Antacid, £2.99 for 75 tablets.

Try instead Put 1tsp of bicarbonate of soda in a glass of water and drink. (If you're on a low-sodium diet, try 1tsp of cider vinegar in $\frac{1}{2}$ glass of water.)

How does it work?

Indigestion is the build-up of acid in the stomach, causing abdominal pain. Bicarbonate of soda neutralises this acid, easing the pain.

Tip To draw out a splinter, cut a small piece of banana skin and put it, flesh side down, on the splinter secured with a plaster.

*Have you ever tried to diet by just eating carefully?
EVERY DAY you have to find THREE different meals
that make you lose weight AND aren't boring.
It's impossible.*

**With temptation everywhere
how the fudge cake is anyone
supposed to stick to a diet?**

*LighterLife Total sorts this.
Very low calorie soups, shakes and bars.
So every day you know what you're going to eat.
Which makes everything super simple.
And super do-able.
So you don't have to be Super Woman.
If you only visit one more weight-loss website ever
you should make it **lighterlife.com***

**Nina dropped 3 dress
sizes in 3 months.**



**LighterLife Total
For people with
3 stone or more
to lose***

LighterLife
total

**Visit our online forum. Become a fan on Facebook
Call 0800 2 988 988 ROI 1800 927 213**

*BMI of 30 or above

Women like you



A day in the diet of... Sarah Whatley, 31, size 10, height, 5ft 6in, from West Sussex. Although Sarah's slim, she's noticed her jeans have been getting tighter recently, so she's keen to lose a few lbs to make the waistband a bit more comfy! *essentials'* nutritionist Fiona Hunter is on hand to help...

What Sarah eats...

BREAKFAST

2 pieces of brown toast with margarine and Marmite.

MID-MORNING SNACK

2 biscuits (one oatmeal and one chocolate-coated).

LUNCH

1 boiled egg and 1 piece of brown toast with margarine, 1 apple.

AFTERNOON SNACK

1 slice of brown toast with 1 slice of ham.

PRE-DINNER NIBBLE

Lump of cheese.

DINNER

2 fishcakes, small portion of oven chips and peas.

DRINKS

2 large glasses of water, 4 cups of tea.



How can Sarah change her diet and drop a few lbs?

'There are a couple of changes that Sarah could make to help her lose some weight,' says Fiona. 'First, she can swap her toast at breakfast for porridge or muesli: both contain slow release (low GI) carbs, which will help to keep mid-morning hunger pangs at bay. Instead of biscuits mid-morning she should have fruit and she needs to eat slightly more at lunch: soup or salad would both be good to add. Finally, Sarah could eat a high-protein snack in the afternoon to stop her picking at food pre-dinner – a low-fat yogurt is ideal.'

True or false?

The more exercise you do, the younger your body

TRUE! Research has found physical activity actually slows down the ageing process by stimulating an enzyme in the body that keeps cells younger and healthier, preventing age-related infections and diseases. Gives the term 'survival of the fittest' a whole new meaning – better hit the gym a bit more often!

Get sporty with the new super-bra!

The bigger your boobs, the more uncomfortable high-impact exercise can be. And if it hurts, you just don't want to do it, right? So hurrah for **Elomi Energise, £29**, a fab underwired sports bra designed for the fuller figure.

Available all the way up to a J cup and 44in back, the high neckline gives you amazing boob control and less bounce! Call 01536 760 282 or visit elomi.lingerie.com.



Health updates

All the latest news you need to know

KNOW THE SYMPTOMS

Ovarian cancer

In the UK, it's one of the most common cancers in women, but few of us know the symptoms. Here's the low-down:

Get checked out early If detected early there's a 90% survival rate but currently, in two out of three cases reported, the disease has spread, meaning limited treatment options.

Be aware Symptoms include: stomach or pelvic pain, persistent abdominal bloating (not the same way as with IBS), difficulty eating and feeling full quickly, an urgent need to urinate, changes in bowel habits, tiredness and back pain.

Take action Keep a diary of your symptoms for a few weeks, then go to see your GP. An internal ultrasound may be the next step.

For more info on ovarian cancer, go to ovarian.org.uk.



Beat the hay fever sniffles

Yes, it's that time of year again! If you're a regular casualty of the hay fever season and hate relying on antihistamines, then we think you should try HayMax, £6.95. It's a nose balm that can stop hay fever in its tracks before any symptoms even develop. Just apply to the base of your nostrils, then re-apply regularly and it'll trap pollen before it enters your respiratory system where allergic reactions occur.



NEWSFLASH!

We will each use the NHS at least 2,000 times in our lifetime, but the problem is, we rarely get a say on how our local health and care services could better suit our needs. So, now's your chance – the NHS wants to hear your views. Go to nhs.uk/links if you'd like to make a comment or suggestion on your local NHS services.

Little changes big results

Look younger, slimmer, have happier kids, make-over your garden... whatever your goal, tiny steps can make a massive difference

big results

Control those kids (without them knowing)...

Restore peace and harmony to your home with our simple ways of getting the kids to co-operate. It's easy, honest!

Play happy families

Stop the squabbling with advice from an expert or one of these great buys...

Listen to a story Audventures audio books, for children aged 4 to 10, feature great characters, music and effects. £6.99, amazon.co.uk.

Draw a picture Spin a wheel and turn a squiggle into the animal

shown. Squiggle On-The-Go, £6.99, brightminds.co.uk – ages 7 and up.

Play a game Choose from any of the 12 magnetic games in the Goplay range, £5.99, wickedvision.co.uk.

Get results Parent coach, Sue Atkins (positive-parents.com), advises. 'Tell them what you want them to do but give a choice. So, "Do you want to do homework before or after tea?" You're in control, but they still have a say.'

Toddler tantrums 'Reassure them and stay positive,' advises Sue Atkins. 'Ask yourself why it happened – were they hungry or bored? Spot the trigger and pre-empt it next time.'

Keep curfews 'Agree with your teen time they should be home by, but make it half an hour before you really want them back,' says Family Peacemaker Sarah Newton (genyguide.com).



3 ways to make mornings easy

1 Sort a routine Routines are brilliant in the mornings when everyone's feeling a bit groggy. Stick to yours, and encourage them to do the same, and you should find things run smoothly.

2 Preparation is key Make packed lunches, lay out clothes, sort backpacks and any relevant PE kit the night before. Longer term, have a weekly check of their school bags to make sure you're up to speed with news from teachers.

3 Get some help Make the process less painful with a helpful product. The Goody Ouchless Paddle Brush, £9.99 (goody.com), is perfect for smoothing out long hair without tears – yours or theirs!



big
results

Get a better-looking garden...

Fab ideas, buys and steps to ensure your garden looks like it's had a full make-over. Perfect for summer days...

Pretty up your plot

You don't need a fancy designer to make a feature of your outdoor room.

Plan and buy Pick a weekend when you can devote time to making over your garden. Buy plants, pots and furniture for the job beforehand.

For instant flowers that need little care, buy pelargoniums, lavender, chrysanthemums, pot marigolds, verbena, petunias and lilies. The garden centres stock all. Mass plants in one colour rather than a garish mix.

Tidy and dig Cut the lawn and dig over the beds, adding fresh compost to boost the soil. If your lawn is worn in spots, treat it with Patch Magic from Miracle-Gro and it should be green again in two weeks.

Looking good Before planting, place bought plants around the garden to see if you're happy with their location.

Hide and cover the fences Willow and hurdle fencing is a quick, cheap option for hiding unsightly areas or covering up fences or walls. There's a good choice at primrose-london.co.uk.

Short of space? Then, go upwards. Morning glory is one of the quickest plants to grow from seed to smother fences with flowers. A summer-flowering clematis won't let you down either, and for a lush, green quick backdrop, try golden hop. For full-on fragrance, sow sweet pea seeds, then plant at the base of wigwam supports for a colourful feature.

Spreading bark or gravel over a dodgy bit of ground is an instant make-over. Buy in bags, from £5, at garden centres.

Tip Try seating in different parts of your garden to catch the sun, the best of views or the sweet smell of summer blooms.

With a quick lick of paint you can give a fence a facelift, smarten up a shed or make a feature of a pretty bench.

1



2



3



4



5



6

7



7 Garden must-haves

1 Shanghai parasol. Hold off the rays and relax under this classic Chinese-style shade £75, Marks & Spencer.
2 Water butt with watering can. Try it wall-mounted or placed on a box for easy use of the tap. At 36 litres, it's practical, and good-looking, too. £66, Greenfingers.

3 Willow Maypole plant supports. Group together to add height for sweet peas and beans. £40 for a set of three, Burford Garden Company.
4 Joe 90 Lantern. Add a tealight and it's great for day and night. £12.50, Garden Trading.
5 Large miner's lantern. Windproof and looks fab in

any setting. £15, Garden Trading.
6 Set of three square planters. Perfect for flowers and herbs on an outdoor window sill. £24.95, Dotcomgiftshop.
7 Fayence folding furniture set. French style with painted beech top. Chairs £35 each, table from £65, Garden Trading.

**big
results**

Look slimmer without losing a pound

Diets and exercise aren't the only way to get trim, as our fashion team knows...

◆ **Lengthen legs**

If longer legs are top of your fantasy body wish list, cheat a few extra inches with a pair of nude shoes. Try it, it really works!

Shoes, £12, 3-8, Tesco.



◆ **Avoid pockets, pleats and power shoulders!**

Statement shoulders, oversized side pockets and front-pleated trousers are all big trends, but if you want to look slimmer they are not your friend!



◆ **Choose a busy print**

Loud prints are everywhere for summer and are perfect for disguising lumps and bumps by stopping the eye from resting in one place – see our pick on page 14.

Top, £39, 6-20, Very.



◆ **Bye-bye bingo wings**

We'd love arms like Jennifer Aniston but without a trainer. Clever dressing, in the shape of the latest kimono-sleeve tops and dresses, will do for now.

Dress, £45, 8-18, People Tree.

◆ **Break away from black!**

We all know black is slimming, but any dark colour will do. Navy, brown or charcoal are softer and more flattering for summer.



◆ **Try clever jeans**

Fancy looking a size smaller in your jeans? Dream Jeans claim to do just that without you dropping a pound. They have panels that lift and hold you in – hurrah!

Jeans, £30, 10-20, Bhs.



◆ **Get fitted**

Nothing will make you look slimmer faster than a well-fitting bra. Head to a store that measures you for free and always try before you buy because sizes differ from shop to shop.



Nip in your waist by adding a belt to a simple top or dress

◆ **Try the oldest trick in the book**

Women have been knocking off inches with vertical stripes for years with good reason. They're a big trend this season, too, so snap them up!

Top, £15, 10-18, Giles at New Look.



◆ **Ignore the size on the label**

Nothing makes you look bigger than squeezing into a size too small. Be realistic about your size and buy clothes that fit – just snip out the tag if it bothers you that much!



◆ **Invest in magic knickers**

Hold-it-all-in pants are every woman's best friend! Pick a pair with bottom-lifting panels as well as tummy-flattening qualities. **TRY** Bum-lift knickers, £12, 10-22, Marks & Spencer.



◆ **Ban the baggies**

Either choose a loose-fitting top with skinny trousers or wide-leg trousers or full skirt with a fitted top – baggy clothes head to toe are a sure-fire way to add the pounds!

Top, £40, 8-16, Monsoon.

◆ **Get lithe legs with a new pair of shoes**

Make larger calves look slimmer with wedges or a chunky block heel – spindly stilettos will just make them look bigger.

Wedges, £25, 3-8, Marks & Spencer.



big results

Get more energy...

Look brighter, feel better and pack more in with some tiny changes to your day

5 instant energy boosters

1 Have that early morning cuppa

OK, we all know we shouldn't drink too much caffeine but eliminating your morning brew might backfire on you badly. Professor Peter Rogers at Bristol University discovered that regular tea- and coffee-drinkers who abstained from their usual morning caffeine fix were less alert and clear-headed than those who drank it. These effects were rapidly reversed by a 60mg dose of caffeine (equivalent to a cup of tea).



2 Take ginseng

The active ingredients – ginsenosides – have been found to improve stamina and concentration. Other energy-boosting supplements include B vitamins and magnesium, which have a vital role to play in energy production.



3 Drink water

The human body is 70% water and all reactions that generate energy in the body take place in water. If you're not getting enough, you'll feel tired and fuzzy-headed. Drink 2 litres a day.

4 Take co-enzyme Q10 This is a key substance necessary for the mitochondria in cells to produce energy. You'll need about 30mg a day, taken with a meal to help absorption. 30 capsules for £4.99, Boots.

5 Eat banana on an oatcake 'Bananas are a great pick-me-up,' says nutritionist Dale Pinnock. 'But because of their high sugar content, they cause the body to release insulin, which makes us feel lethargic. Eat one with a high-fibre food like an oatcake and the carbohydrates will be released more slowly into the bloodstream.'



tip Raring to go? Experts believe it's quality not quantity of sleep that's the key to well-being, so make the most of the hours you do get.

Make your body do the work

Just as you can relax with meditation, there are techniques that can pep you up, too.

And breathe... Try some Kapalabhati breathing – simple, deep breathing that uses the diaphragm (the sheet of muscle at the bottom of your lungs) and increases energy by releasing tension. Kneel, sitting comfortably with your back straight but relaxed. Contract your abdominal muscles quickly, causing your diaphragm to rise and force the air out of your lungs. Relax your abdomen, allowing the air to return gently to your lungs. Do 20 breaths, and feel the difference!

tip Go green! When scientists in Washington, USA, set students computer tests, those with plants on their desks were 12% faster and less tired than those without.

big results

Create more space at home...

Wishing you had a bigger home? These clever tips should help...

Secret space-makers

Hunt for storage in unlikely places:

Set an armchair at an angle and store magazines or toys behind it.

Fit a couple of shelves under the kitchen sink or around the bath pipes.

Store awkward items, such as an ironing board, on the back of a door in the spare room – aplaceforeverything.co.uk sells specialised hooks for £8.

Use boxes under the bed to clear the wardrobe of out-of-season clothes.

tip Keep clutter out of sight in the hall with smart but handy baskets for shoes and stylish hooks for coats.



4 QUICK TRICKS WITH MIRRORS

- ◆ Staggering mirrors on either side of a stairway gives the appearance of width.
- ◆ A mirror at the end of a hallway will make it appear longer.
- ◆ Put a mirror opposite a window to bring more light into a room.
- ◆ Hang a mirror on the wall adjacent to a pretty picture to reflect the art and increase the feeling of space.

6 decorating cheats for a bigger room

1 Paint walls a pale shade, but keep the skirting boards and coving white to make walls appear further back.

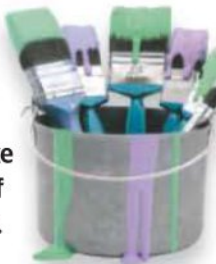
2 Furniture, curtains and flooring in the same tone colour group as the walls make a space seem bigger.

3 The lighter a room, the larger it'll look. Ensure every nook and cranny is lit. Spotlights on objects at opposite ends of a room make them look further apart.

4 Wallpapers with a vertical pattern (such as the Graham & Brown Vitality Floral, £30 per roll) make a room seem taller, while horizontals add width. A smaller design creates the illusion of space, too.

5 Paint a kitchen/diner the same colour all through, so the smaller room seems like an extension of the bigger one.

6 In small rooms, avoid heavy curtains. Use roman blinds or sheers.



big results

Knock years off your looks...

The right products and beauty treatments will ensure you're looking more youthful.

Take steps to a smoother you

Who needs Botox? There are cheaper, less painful, ways to hold those wrinkles at bay.

Minimise lines: Swap your cream-to-powder foundation for a creamy, hydrating base. Instead of sitting in lines and wrinkles, it will have a youthful, plumping effect.

Try Maybelline New York Dream Creamy Foundation, £7.99.

Protection perfection: Go for a day cream that's at least SPF20.

After a summer of application you'll be amazed at how much better your skin looks. **Try Origins A Perfect World SPF25**, £30.

Look after your eyes: Dragging the eye area when removing mascara and liner is one of the biggest causes of ageing this delicate area. Thoroughly soak an eye make-up remover pad and press onto each eye for 30 seconds.



3 speedy complexion boosters!

1 Stuck in a cleanse, tone and moisturiser rut? Shake up your skincare routine by adding an extra step – we love serums that can do everything from evening out your skin to plumping.

2 Get a glow the natural way by massaging your skin every morning after cleansing to get the circulation moving.

3 Blocked pores stop your skin looking fresh and radiant. Do a DIY steam once a week to help unclog them. Just pour hot water into a bowl and hold your face above the steam with a towel over your head for at least five minutes.

Smile! It's the best anti-ageing trick of all – and it's free!

SUBSCRIBE TO **essentials** 12 ISSUES FOR **JUST £18**

That's just £1.50 an issue!

Call now

0845 123 1231

Call 8am-9pm 7 days a week quoting 12E
or visit online www.magazinesdirect.com/IESDY

Twelve issues of essentials for £18 is by annual Direct Debit. This offer is for UK subscribers only with a minimum term of 12 months and refunds cannot be issued during this initial period.

For a money-saving make-over

go secondhand

It's easy, with some basic DIY and a few beautiful bargain buys, to give your home a cheap, chic new look!



Meet the owner

We're so inspired by Nicky Fraser's Victorian home in Devon. Mum-of-three

Nicky is a self-confessed 'thriftaholic', with a cool, vintage style. Since the family moved in six years ago, she's renovated and redecorated their home – husband Julian isn't into DIY at all!

Give kitchen furniture a facelift

A fresh lick of paint on everything but the kitchen sink makes for a cheap make-over. Nicky bought the dresser secondhand some years ago – it was dark oak at the time and fairly battered. The farmhouse dining chairs

had seen better days, too. Now, white walls and flooring make a feature of the furniture, which Nicky has painted in contrasting shades, as well as the pretty china and the classic checked cotton tablecloth.

BARGAIN BUYS

Dresser in Vinyl Silk First Dawn, £14.98 for 2.5 litres, Dulux. Chairs in Cornfield, Richmond Green and Celebration, all Non-Drip Gloss, £13.98 for 750ml, Dulux. For similar check cloth, £10-£20, House of Bath.

tip To make your own curtains, take an old one apart and copy it as an easy pattern. For a bargain, look for fabric offcuts or the end of a roll.

Transform a dowdy interior

Armed with a wallpaper stripper, Nicky got rid of all the ugly textured paper and then hung lining paper on the walls before painting them off-white to maximise the light in the room. This simple backdrop sets off Nicky's many vintage finds, along with the retro floral sofa covers, fashioned out of a pair of curtains bought from a charity shop, and the chintz curtains, which were made from an offcut of fabric picked up at a local haberdashery store.



BARGAIN BUYS Nicky has furnished her living room with well-chosen secondhand pieces. Similar floral armchair and sofa covers can be found at Ikea in the EKTORP range – look for Byvik multicolour, from £80.

tip Bringing colour to a neutral scheme by painting one wall or a chimney breast adds character without being too overwhelming.



A place to sew and unwind

Nicky set up a sewing area in the old dining room, as the family eats in the open-plan kitchen. A Lloyd Loom chair goes beautifully with the floral tablecloth, which covers the £5 charity-shop table. The chimney breast has been painted to match and is an ideal background for a colourful display of family cards on a string.

BARGAIN BUYS The classic Lloyd Loom chair, mirror on chain and table are all from charity shops.



tip To paint furniture, sand it, then wipe with white spirit. Apply a primer, two layers of undercoat, then two topcoats in gloss, silk eggshell or satinwood. Leave to dry in between.

NEWTAKE

Add a burst of colour to a neutral background with painted furniture.



◀ Carry the theme upstairs...

tip Online auctions, such as eBay, car-boot sales and antique markets are great hunting grounds if you like the retro look. Sift through the gems to find unusual items and good bargains.



NEWTAKE
Recycle retro fabric in florals, dots or stripes to bring an old-style touch to soft furnishings.

tip Make bunting with fabric scraps, wide bias binding and pinking shears. Cut out the flags using a template, then sew evenly along the tape, leaving ends for hanging.



Pretty in pink

The patterned wallpaper creates a feature wall in daughter Isabel's feminine bedroom. Nicky made the cheery bunting from offcuts of Cath Kidston fabric, while a simple white desk doubles up as a dressing table.

Create a bright and breezy bedroom

The bed and wardrobe, which again were picked up secondhand, were originally in a tatty, dark wood. Nicky painted both

the same restful colour and instantly brought the scheme together, making the bedroom lighter and more modern. She

introduced a retro touch with rose-strewn curtains and a comfy mound of cushions in mix-and-match rescued fabrics.

BARGAIN BUYS Bed and wardrobe painted in Soft Gooseberry, £14.98 for 2.5 litres, Dulux; curtains and nets from Austin Curtains & Blinds.

BARGAIN BUYS For similar, floral quilted bedspread, £30, Matalan; white Belgravia dressing table, £99, Ivory Pearl Interiors; Florence Pink wallpaper, £9.99 per roll, Wallpaper Direct.

It's all in the detail...

with vintage-style fabrics, classic old roses, sepia photos and wooden pegs!



GO PRACTICAL
A length of string and wooden clothes pegs make a homely and inexpensive display for cards.



TURN BACK TIME
Sepia photos, a mantel clock and a splash of red from a pot of roses add character to the mantelpiece.



MAKE IT ALL WHITE
A backdrop of neutral walls with white furniture makes it easy to mix in any accessories and update in the future.



FEATURE DOORS
Lining a cupboard with fabric is the retro way to co-ordinate soft furnishings and make a feature.

What to shop for

Anything retro! From storage items to fabric, in old-style floral and simple furniture.

York Petite wood-burning stove, £549, Broseley Fires.



Storage boxes, pack of four, in pink or blue, £14.95, House of Bath.



Patchwork quilt in spring colours, £120, Berry Red.



Writing/dressing table in Silk White, £285, Aspace.



Clarissa fabric, £21.99 per metre; Dotty taupe PVC fabric, £7.99 per metre, both Dunelm Mill.



20-piece rose porcelain dinner set, £39.25, QVC.

White wicker lidded basket, £25, Matalan.



Polka dot hangers, pack of four, £5.95, House of Bath.



Rydal double bed, £180, Wilkinson Plus.



Stackers Boutique faux leather two-piece jewellery box, £22.50, QVC.



Coal bucket, £19.95, Lily & Lime.



Vintage cake sign, £6, Bhs.

China white lacquer bedside cabinet, £235, Supatra.



Linea cushions Ditsy Floral, £15; Watercolour Floral, £15, both House of Fraser.



tip To update an old cabinet, carefully remove the centre panel from the door and replace it with a panel of fabric, hung from a curtain wire along the top.



Vintage floral bathroom

Terracotta-style floor tiles provide a warm contrast to the all-white bathroom suite. Classic dusky pinks and pale blues work beautifully together, whether on a cupboard lined with material or a floral cushion. Set a jug filled with cottage-garden blooms on the side of the bath before guests arrive.

BARGAIN BUYS Matalan has a beautiful tapestry-style cushion to match the look: **Coming Up Roses cushion, £16.** The terracotta-style floor tiles are from B&Q, and the china jug and basin come from a local flea market.

For stockists, see page 131 FEATURE: JENNIFER NEWTON AND ANNABELLE GRUNDY. PHOTOS: COLIN POOLE

The new multivitamin your heart will love.

New Centrum Cardio is the only complete multivitamin with plant sterols – which are scientifically proven to help maintain healthy cholesterol – along with boosted levels of heart healthy vitamins B6, B12 and folic acid. So, it's the complete multivitamin for those who care about their heart.

Clever you. Clever Centrum.



*Trademark. Vitamins and minerals may be of benefit to men and women on a restricted diet

Shop online at boots.com

Available at most



The smart woman's guide to yard sales

Forget eBay and car-boot sales, the hot money-making scheme from the US is the yard sale. And all you need is some outside space and loads of unwanted stuff...

You've been decluttering like a mad woman and, while your efforts have definitely paid off you're still left with a mountain of unwanted items.

All your old toys, books, clothes, soft furnishings, hi-fis and TVs need a new home. In the past, to make a bit of money, eBay would be your number-one option. But now, there's the 'yard sale' (also known as a garage sale), which has been big business in the US for years and is taking off here.

The idea is to utilise any space outside your home to set up a stall and sell off unwanted items. But, there's more to a successful yard sale than plonking your junk on a table. To reap the best financial rewards possible, follow our guide and enjoy your day!

Women like you



Nessie Poston, from Great Bardfield, Essex, takes part in the annual Great Bardfield Garage Sale and says there's a lot of money to be made, as long as you know what to sell.

'Each year, I make about £200-£300 and it always amazes me what people will buy,' she says. 'Toys are always popular; old electrical stuff; kitchen equipment; and clothes (as long as they're in good condition) always go well. I even sold my ancient pushbike for £15 when it was covered in rust, but somebody obviously felt they could make good use of it.'

Yard sales dos and don'ts

✓ DO PRE-PLAN

Decide what you'll be selling and who'll help you on the day.

✗ DON'T FORGET THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCATION

If yours is the first house on a busy road, with a large front lawn, great. But if you're in a cul-de-sac, you'll either need to advertise (see below); team up with a friend in a better location, or ask the first house in your street to let you put up balloons and signs on their front lawn (offering them a cut of profits, of course!). If outdoor space is limited, use your front window to display your best goods and lure

buyers into the back garden for the rest of the booty.

✓ DO ADVERTISE

Drop leaflets through neighbours' letterboxes; stick them in the pub and shop windows. Make a deal with local businesses that if they'll distribute your leaflets, you'll have theirs at your sale.

✗ DON'T UNDERPRICE

Avoid being short-changed on the day by doing your research. Make use of eBay and see what comparable items are selling for.

✓ DO BE PREPARED

Make sure you have: **pasting tables**; plastic sheeting in case it rains; **plenty of change**; food and drink (for you!); pens and paper for totting up prices; a chair; bin liners; carrier bags.

✗ DON'T HAVE AN UNTIDY STALL

Make your sales area bright and colourful (think balloons and bunting). Separate items, with your most saleable items at the front. If you've room, lay out tables in a semi-circle.

✓ DO BE FIRM

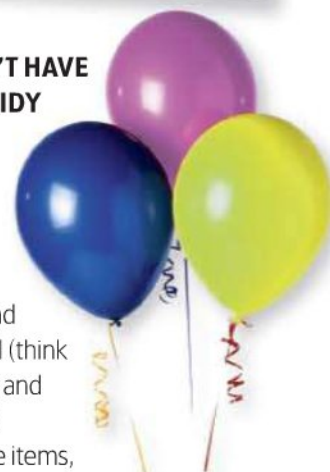
State prices firmly, with no upwards inflection in your voice or you'll sound as though you're prepared to be beaten down!

✗ DON'T BE INFLEXIBLE

You can change selling ploys as the day goes on in order to get rid of stuff. Try a tactic used by the supermarkets – 'Buy one, get one free'.



You'll be laughing all the way to the nearest shoe shop – once you sell out!



CANNY CONSUMER

Get cash, not vouchers for insurance claims

Insurance should give you peace of mind, but it pays to know your rights, as these readers found out



Sheila Corricelli and daughter Luisa live in Ealing, west London. They learnt a lot about insurance after claiming on their contents policy for the first time.

Luisa explains: 'In January 2008, my camera was stolen. I was advised to report the incident to the police and, luckily, Mum found that the camera could be replaced on the household contents insurance. The police crime reference number and receipt was needed, but the claim was straightforward.'

The insurance company refunded the value of my camera in Jessops vouchers. When I went to replace my camera I found a new

model had come out and Jessops no longer sold the one I'd owned. This meant I had to pay out more than the vouchers would cover. I also had to replace the memory card, which cost more at Jessops than I'd originally paid at John Lewis. Irritatingly, if I'd been given cash, I could have replaced both on Amazon and been left just £50 out of pocket. As it was, I had to pay an extra £40 as well as the £50 excess.

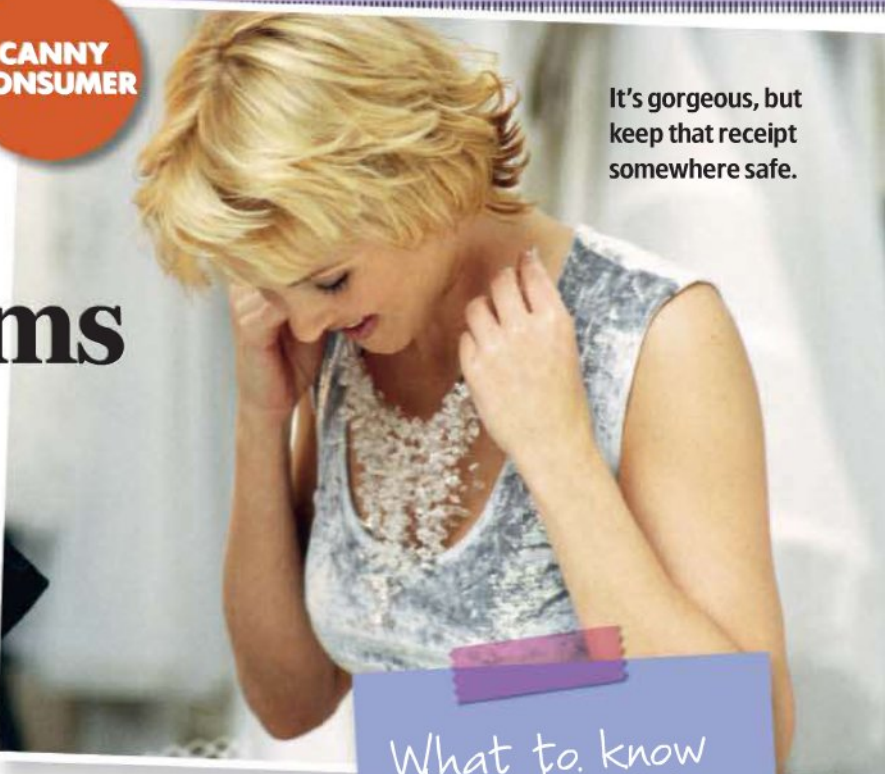
Then in October 2008, my father's car was stolen. It was

My parents argued that the vouchers weren't a like-for-like replacement - and won

eventually found and returned, but minus the iPod in the glove box. This time, the claim was settled in Comet vouchers and, again, they weren't enough to cover a replacement. The reason



Wise up when you claim for valuables.



It's gorgeous, but keep that receipt somewhere safe.

given for issuing vouchers is to prevent false claims - but, surely, they should cover the cost of replacing the insured item?

Sadly, four months later, Mum lost a beautiful, one-off gold bracelet that had been bought in Italy. A claim was sent in, but

this time H Samuel vouchers were offered to replace it, which was ridiculous as there was nothing remotely similar

at the high-street jewellers!

Having checked the policy, my parents put forward a successful argument that the vouchers were not a like-for-like replacement. The insurance company agreed and refunded the full value of the jewellery in cash.

Looking back, we should have questioned that the vouchers offered before did not match the value of the previous stolen items. At least now we know our rights and Mum can replace that bracelet this summer in Italy.

What to know when claiming

- ✓ Check your policy. Most state they replace 'new-for-old', but it is usually left with the insurer to decide whether a claim is settled by repair, replacement or with cash.
- ✓ A replacement is only reasonable if the item can be properly matched. For example, it's unacceptable for antique jewellery to be replaced by modern jewellery at a high-street chain of jewellers.
- ✓ Vouchers should cover the cost of replacing the item. If that item is no longer available and you need to buy a newer model, ask the insurer for an extra voucher to cover the cost.
- ✓ Generally, you are entitled to a cash settlement if an acceptable replacement cannot be found.
- ✓ If you are offered vouchers that won't cover a like-for-like replacement, insist on further compensation. If this fails, talk to the Financial Ombudsmen Service on 0300 123 9123 (financial-ombudsman.org.uk).



Get it CHEAP!

For fab ideas for your home, don't miss Grand Designs Live, 1-9 May 2010 at London Excel. With our special reader offer, book two tickets for just £20, saving up to £16*. To book, call 0844 581 0771 or visit granddesignslive.com, quoting GDON1.

Get it FREE!

RoC has just brought out its latest daily serum. The Wrinkle Correxion range works in the skin surface helping to fight wrinkles and fine lines where they start. Go to roclookbelow.co.uk and hit the 'Try it' tab to send off for a free sample.

CHOOSE YOUR CAR THE SAME WAY YOU CHOOSE YOUR LIPSTICK.



Find your perfect car

If you're looking to buy a secondhand car without the petrol-head jargon, try carmony.co.uk. Cars are guaranteed from approved dealers, with all checks done. You can browse by car type, but we love the Lifestyle Search feature. Questions from price range to how many shopping bags you can fit in or colour preference, give a good starting point if you're overwhelmed by choice.

Mini upgrade for PCs

If you use Vista or XP on your home PC, it's worth upgrading to Windows 7. You'll see great improvements when you're working on documents. It's simpler to use with your mp3 player and you can even watch, pause, rewind and record TV with it. Upgrade to Windows 7 from £64.75 (online only), pcworld.co.uk.



What's the best way to paint a room?

These easy steps will save you time and give a perfect finish.

1 Prepare Once you've taken down curtains and lights and stored them away, and covered your furniture and floor with dust sheets, wash down walls, with sugar soap to remove any grime.

■ B&Q Sugar Soap Concentrate, £2.98 for 500ml.



2 Cut in Protect light switches, sockets, windows and doors with masking tape, then go around the edges using firm brush strokes. Try Perfect Edges angled brushes from Dulux for more control around these tricky areas.

■ Dulux Perfect Edges Brush, from £4.79, amazon.co.uk.



3 Paint with a roller Run your roller over the paint tray until it's covered. Use smooth, vertical strokes for an even coat. Or, save yourself time and effort with a battery-powered roller.

■ Dulux Paintpod Compact, £29.98, B&Q.



BARGAIN HUNTER

THIS MONTH KITCHEN PORN

Love the latest sleek, glossy black appliances, but thought they were too expensive? Not these...

BEST-VALUE A+ WASHER

Beko WME8227B A+ 8kg washing machine, £291, laskys.com

Large, practical door allows for easy loading.

PROS The A+ rating makes it one of the most energy efficient. The 'Quick Programme' can do a full load in 61 mins.

CONS Not a washer/dryer, otherwise hard to fault.



ZAP IN BLACK

Whirlpool MAX25 Freestanding Auto Steam Microwave, £99.98, B&Qdiy.com

The rounded back is a cool design feature and it's space-saving.

PROS Fits snugly in a corner; 7 power levels; 4-year guarantee.

CONS Pricier than dirt-cheap models, but worth the extra.



WORKTOP SHOW-OFF

Jack Lalanne Compact Power Juicer Express for Whole Fruit and Veg, £63, qvcuk.com

Easy to use and clean and takes up little room on the worktop.

PROS This juicer takes whole fruit, so no need to get out a chopping board.

CONS Like most juicers, parts need to be cleaned straight after use.



DINKY FRIDGE

Lec T5038B combi fridge/freezer, £219.98, 365electrical.com

This well-known smaller fridge is just out in black.

PROS Quiet, stylish, compact and good value for money. 1225x475x525mm.

CONS Doesn't come in a larger family size.



MOD SET

Russell Hobbs 17869 Buxton Kettle, £19.99, 4 Slice Compact Toaster Black 14340, £24.99, both amazon.co.uk.

Great-value, stylish set for a big brand name.

PROS The rapid-boil and cordless kettle is a tidy time-saver, while the four-slice toaster has variable browning features.

CONS Not sold as a set, which would be cheaper.



Check it out

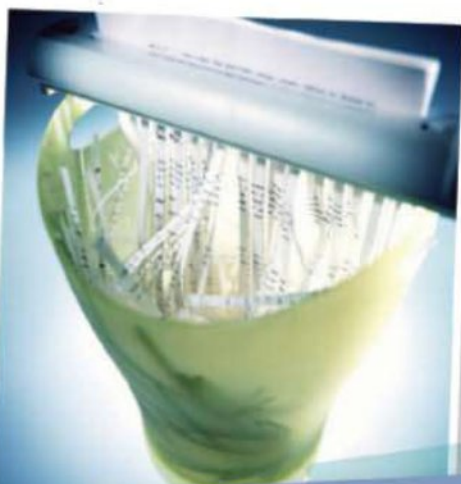
- ★ MONEY TIPS
- ★ BEST BUYS
- ★ EXPERT HELP

Credit Card Beeper! Not only does this holder look gorgeous, it also emits a regular beep until your card is put back in. Ideal for the more forgetful among us. **Black Titanium Card Beeper** by Menu, £18.90 from mylivingspace.co.uk.



Protect yourself from ID fraud

It's more rife than ever with easy financial access over the Internet, but there are simple ways to safeguard yourself.



Q What is the risk?

A ID fraud means someone steals your identity details or credit card and bank details to buy goods.

Q If it happens to me?

A You are protected under the banking code, including for items bought online. Everyone is vulnerable to fraud, but there are precautions you can take to avoid it:

ONLINE ♦ Check the address bar says 'https'. The 's' is for 'secure' and should appear before you input credit card details.

♦ Beware of emails asking you to give personal details.

FOR POST ♦ Shred all personal paperwork. ♦ When you move, redirect post at royalmail.co.uk. ♦ Always check statements.

CREDIT REPORTS ♦ Contact Experian at creditexpert.co.uk for your credit file or if you think you've been targeted. ♦ Look out for new accounts being opened on your file. ♦ If you're turned down for credit, check your credit report again.

Cordless Steam Iron + free Press Wizard

Anything that makes that pile of ironing easier to get through sounds good to us and this great-value iron certainly helps.

✓ Cordless Steam Iron £19.97 (+ £2.99 p&p) – the heat recharges as it's placed on the holder.

✓ Its micro-porous Teflon surface spreads heat evenly, cutting ironing time and giving a crease-free finish.

✓ Free silicone Press Wizard – protects delicate garments from shine, scorch and iron marks.

TO ORDER, and for terms and conditions, call freephone 0800 138 0088 (quote XES242, product 601+676). Calls from mobiles and non-BT landlines may incur a charge. Closing date 2 August 2010.

essentials
MINI OFFER



We love...

EcoSneaks!

Simple has a range of super-sustainable, but cool-looking trainers. Made from certified organic cotton and recycled materials, including car tyres for the soles, which makes a great use of obsolete rubber and also leads to an extra hard-wearing trainer. See the range at lovethoseshoes.com



Simple Pinwheel Cub Sneaker, £54, beige hemp upper with pink organic cotton laces.

Simple Satire Hortensia Sneaker, £59, purple silk upper and gorgeous floral pattern inner.

SHOP OF THE MONTH...

naturebotts.co.uk

It's the site for baby essentials and presents. Set up in 2001 by mums Jess Hyde and Penny Bowen, after discovering an eco-friendly disposable nappy from Germany. Being free from perfumes and chlorine, the nappy doesn't aggravate babies' bottoms, even on those with eczema, and as it's compostable it's kinder to the planet. Over the years, Naturebotts has added lots more eco-friendly baby products. Order online before 3pm for next working day delivery. Free delivery over £60.



Sort out all clothes not worn for two years and take them to the charity shop. TV presenter Chris Tarrant is backing the *Donate, Don't Waste* campaign and says, 'Almost all clothes donated can help, whether it's Prada or Primark. Even those that can't go on the shop floor can be sold to textile merchants to raise money.' If each UK household donated only one extra black bag of clothing, we could save 25m bags from landfill. Visit charityshops.org.uk.



Earth Friendly Baby calendula cream, £5.49 for 113g tube.

Bambino Merino sleeping bag £49.95.



FEATURE: JENNIFER NEWTON. PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES. *SAVING IS ON TWO ADULT WEEKEND TICKETS PURCHASED ON THE DOOR (PRICE PER TICKET £18 WITHOUT OFFER). OFFER EXPIRES: 30 APRIL 2010. TICKETS MUST BE BOOKED IN PAIRS. TERMS & CONDITIONS APPLY

essentials

Editor Jules Barton-Breck

Deputy Editor Lucie Tobin

Creative Director Stuart Thomas

Editorial enquiries 020 314 87211

DESIGN 020 314 87222

Art Editor Rebecca Brannigan

Senior Designer Claire McCall

Picture Editor Tracey Pocock

PRODUCTION 020 314 87214

Chief Sub/Production Editor Sue Linford

Acting Deputy Chief Sub Editor Victoria Richards

FOOD 020 314 87218

Food Editor Jennifer Bedloe

FASHION 020 314 87227

Style Director Lucy Turner

Deputy Fashion Editor Lindsey Baker

BEAUTY 020 314 87224

Beauty Editor Sarah Cooper-White

FEATURES 020 314 87223

Features Editor Angela Cooke

HOMES 020 314 87226

Lifestyle Writer Fiona Galley 020 314 87211

Contributors Jennifer Newton (consumer & homes) James Luckhurst (travel); Enjoli Liston (features); Olivia Stoddart (fashion); Lucy Jessop and Phil Mundy (food)

Managing Director Jackie Newcombe

PA Amy Ransom

Acting PA Zoe Jordan 020 314 87651

Publishing Director Linda Swidenbank

Publisher Ilka Schmitt

Editorial Director Sue James

ADVERTISING

Southbank Group Advertising Director

Alex Russell 020 314 87570

Advertising Director Laura Makin 020 314 87617

Sales Executive Hannah Kreeger 020 314 87618

Agency Sales Team Manager

Kieran Killeen 020 314 87603

Advertising Manager (Regional Sales)

Jo McLenaghan 0161 872 2162

Beauty Communications Director

Zoe Robertson 020 314 87577

Creative Director, Business Development

Rebecca Duggan 020 314 87580

Head of Creative Solutions

Carla Faria 020 314 87607

Creative Director Maria Ginn 020 314 83617

Project Director Hannah Spice 020 314 83623

Project Manager Rachel Eggleton 020 314 83613

Art Director Ben Briley 020 314 83619

Classified Advertising Manager

Amy Bowler 020 314 82505

Classified Sales Team Leader

Tom Briant 020 314 82530

Classified Sales Executive

Stephanie Jackson 020 314 82992

Classified copy Hannah Allan 020 314 82561

Innovator Advertising Manager

Zoe Freeman 020 314 83707

Marketing Manager Katherine Smith

020 314 87690

Subscriptions Marketing Manager

Sarah Potter 020 314 86303

Production Manager Brian Martin 020 314 85442

Ad Production Paul Addison 020 314 85445

Syndication Sales Executive

Cerie McGee 020 314 85484

Circulation Manager – IPC Southbank

Jenny Pillay 020 314 83456

IPC | SOUTHBANK

A part of IPC Media, a Time Warner Company

For editorial enquiries: 020 314 87211

email: feedback@ipcmedia.com

Coming up in June

essentials

100 things to make you happy

- ◆ Fashion for every shape
- ◆ Sexy easy hair
- ◆ Fab swimwear from £5
- ◆ Eating tips to make you glow
- ◆ No-tan suntan tricks
- ◆ Tiny health tweaks
- ◆ Make-money ideas
- ...all to put a smile on your face!

ON SALE 29 April 2010

32-PAGE MAGAZINE

Make it easy!

35+ recipes this month

- ◆ Happy sunshine food
- ◆ Instant BBQ ideas!
- ◆ Make perfect pastry

PLUS! Get creative...

Simple ideas to glam up indoors and out

Subscribe now! GET ESSENTIALS DELIVERED EVERY MONTH & SAVE OVER £12.50 – SEE PAGE 96

PHOTOS: CORBIS; CHARLIE RICHARDS



TRUST US!
Created for
you in the
essentials
kitchen



Unilever



The
mysterious
new
fragrances
of
**Twilight
Sensations.**

10 mini DIY tricks

If a bank holiday means a spot of DIY, at least these ideas are quick, fun and effective



Give cupboards a lift

Surely the speediest way to give a dresser or chest of drawers a new lease of life is to treat it to a set of fancy knobs.

Hand-painted flower knob, ceramic spotty knob and glass knob, from £3.95 each, all Bombay Duck.

Brighten up

Liven up an unused fireplace with candles, or fairy lights woven through an embellished lantern or birdcage. Linea birdcage candle holder, £15, House of Fraser.



Get papering!

Use spare wallpaper to line drawers or buy new designs for the back of a dresser.

Heritage Floral and Neon Damask, £19.50 per roll, both Marks & Spencer.

Fabric feature

A gorgeous piece of fabric has many uses – put it under a glass-top table, cover a seat pad or make a statement in a rococo-style frame. Cotton fabrics, from £16 per metre, all Cath Kidston.



get creative

Wall flowers

A whimsical wall sticker will make even the duller room come to life. **Sakura Blossom sticker, £18, Spin Collective.**



Art in an instant

Buy a set of postcards or notelets, frame them, hang in a group, and cheat your way to an art gallery. **The New Yorker Food notecards, £7.99 for 20, Papernation.**



In the frame

Keep this wooden decoration bare and hang it over a door to give it a majestic air, or stick it to a plain mirror frame, then paint. **Wooden wall decoration, £22, Cox & Cox.**



Classy curtains

Cinch in your curtains with a stylish holdback and add matching finials for an extra flourish. **Cut Glass Bullet holdback, £11.95, and Crystal Diamond Effect finials, £13.98 a pair, both B&Q.**

Looking good!

Window film is a quick and easy alternative to blinds when you need a bit of privacy, and it's a great way to pretty up glass door panels, too. **Blossom window film, from £14 per metre, Purifrost.**



French chic

Give drab furniture two coats of emulsion, then sand away the bits that wear naturally. **Matt emulsion, from £18 for 2.5 litres, Laura Ashley.**

For stockists, see page 131 FEATURE: FIONA GALLEY



Now
available in
Comfort.

Bounce back to health

Has your dog lost his bounce? Then try Pedigree Joint Care+ to ease any stiff joints. In just six weeks, you could see a real difference in your dog's mobility

As we get older our stamina and mobility levels tend to drop, which is why a nutritious diet, regular exercise and the right vitamin supplements are essential for health. Maintaining your dog's fitness is no different, especially since statistics show that more than a third of dogs in the UK over five years old show signs of reduced mobility.

Fortunately, help is at hand from Pedigree® Joint Care+. This daily treat can help ease joint stiffness and give your dog a boost of vitality after only six weeks. Available in two flavours, Pedigree Joint Care+ is a tasty treat your dog will love. It's a blend of natural, active ingredients that support and promote the body's own regeneration process. These include omega 3 for flexibility and suppleness, glucosamine to help rebuild joint tissue and cartilage, and chondroitin to help ease stiffness. It also contains added methionine, an amino acid that helps regenerate the body's tissues and aids detoxification. A mobile and agile dog is a happy dog, so give your pet the chance of a new lease of life.



Pedigree Joint Care+ treats will keep your dogs happy and healthy.

'Zeefa is full of life again'

Joanne Zeff lives in Barnet with her family and dogs, Zeefa and Zoe

'Zeefa and Zoe play a big role in our family life and the children love them. It gives me great pleasure to see the dogs happy,

healthy and having fun. I've always taken them out for a couple of hours every day for a really good, long run. Recently, I noticed that Zeefa was having problems getting off the sofa and looked stiff when we went for our walks. My first thought was that she must have hurt herself somehow.

'Then a friend suggested she could be experiencing stiff joints and that I should give her Pedigree Joint Care+ treats. I gave her one every morning and really noticed a difference in her after only six weeks. She is now full of life and like a puppy again. Zeefa absolutely loves her Pedigree Joint Care+ treats.'



Skye the footballer

SIGN UP NOW

Put the bounce back into your dog's life and join up for the Six Week Challenge at jointcarechallenge.co.uk. Simply enter code ESS2 to register. You'll receive a free sample and starter pack of tasty Pedigree Joint Care+ and be able to read success stories from other owners whose dogs are now enjoying better joint health.



Fragrant cases

Before our cases go up in the loft after a holiday, I vacuum them to get rid of any bits of beach debris we've brought home with us. I then put scented tumble dryer sheets inside so they'll smell nice and fresh next time we use them.

Rachel Milton, Pudsey



BEAUTY ON A BUDGET

To give my skin a boost – and save money on cosmetics – I squeeze a few drops of lemon juice in some bottled water and chill it. I use it once I've cleansed and it leaves my face feeling fresh and squeaky clean. It smells lovely, too!

Bethan Jones, Swansea



Long-lasting fruit

I DON'T STORE GRAPES, BLACKCURRANTS AND OTHER BERRIES IN CLOSED CONTAINERS IN THE FRIDGE ANY MORE. INSTEAD, I PUT THEM IN A COLANDER AND LEAVE THEM ON THE SIDE IN THE KITCHEN AND THEY STAY FRESH FOR MUCH LONGER.

Debbie Smith, Exeter



Your top tips

Made for sharing – your best ideas for saving time, money and stress!

Give them the VIP treatment

Since greetings cards can be expensive, I decided to make something more personal. I glue a selection of photos that mean something to the birthday boy or girl onto a ready-made plain card from a stationer's or supermarket. It comes to a fraction of the price and it's great fun to do as well.

Keri Rodman, High Wycombe



GO FOR SOME SPARKLE!

To clean jewellery, soak overnight in a glass of water mixed with a little washing-up liquid. In the morning, brush with an old toothbrush to remove dirt, rinse and dry.

Barbara Girling, Woodbridge



IT'S THE ICING ON THE CAKE!

Had to share my tip for writing on cakes. First I use a toothpick to draw an outline of what I want to say, then trace over with icing – failsafe and simple!

Margaret Smith, Dundee

PERK UP YOUR PLANTS

I dissolve 1tbsp Epsom salts in 1pt lukewarm water and use it as a tonic for my plants – roses seem to do well on it.

Nader Tavet, Manchester

No more tea stains

Rub salt onto damp cups to shift stubborn marks – easy!

Claire Astley, Chorley

HATS ON!

If you're wearing a hat to a wedding or other special occasion, use self-adhesive Velcro inside the rim – guaranteed not to blow off, whatever the weather!

Lyn Cole, Gloucestershire

SMELL EVEN SWEETER

Apply your perfume straight after a bath or shower – your pores will be open and the scent won't wear off so quickly.

Joanne Wilkinson, Sheffield



Doing a bit of a cover up?

I USE AIRFIX MODEL PAINT TO COVER CHIPS ON ORNAMENTS. THE RANGE OF COLOURS IS EXCELLENT, SO YOU GET A CLOSE MATCH TO THE ORIGINAL.

D Lynes, Swindon

NO ELBOW GREASE REQUIRED

Whenever there's any hard-to-shift, burnt-on food on the inside of my microwave, I don't waste time scrubbing to get rid of it. I heat up a bowl of water, with a squirt of washing-up liquid in it, for a few minutes, then just wipe the inside clean. Try it – it works a treat!

R Jackson, Kent



Fall in love with your new



*Get the value-packed May issue
on sale 30 March*

FREE Keep Calm Gallery prints
FREE Best-ever Living Room Ideas Book

What's new in store...

This month's round-up of what's worth popping in your trolley when you're doing the weekly shop

Big dippers

There's a bit of a 'who serves the best nibbles' competition going on these days, but put these out and you'll be a winner...



◆ The new Red Sky Sea Salt & Suffolk Cider Vinegar crisps are made from 100% natural ingredients that are full of flavour – and they don't go soggy when you dip them in the salsa! £1.59 from supermarkets.



◆ Just as good on their own as to dip, get your hands on a bag of Mrs Crimble's Cheese Bites. They're deliciously light and reminded us of little pockets of air. £1.29, from Asda, Tesco and Sainsbury's.



◆ There are some fab new flavours in the REAL handcooked crisp range and each bag has been given an aptly named face: look out for the real-life Cluedo Colonel on the Ham & English Mustard bag (£1.71). From most supermarkets.

Wheat & gluten free!



tip Serve up a cocktail surprise to your friends. Just add a scoop of Elderflower sorbet to a glass of Champagne... mmm, cheers!

Feeling a bit fruity?

We're loving Bottlegreen this month. First we discovered Simply Sorbet in refreshing Elderflower (£2.99 for 500ml): it's the low-cal alternative to ice cream when you need a bit of indulgence. Then these bottles of Squeezy Squash! (£1.79 each) turned up in three big-taste flavours: Orange, Apple and Blackcurrant & Apple. Not only are they mess-free, they're easier to store in the cupboard than the tall bottles we usually buy. From Waitrose.



Need something quick?

When we're hungry and in a hurry we want to be able to grab something fabulously tasty from the cupboard or freezer...



◆ Thought you didn't have time for a risotto tonight? Oh, yes you do – it's just a 6-minute wait before you can tuck into Waitrose Frozen Pea and Asparagus Risotto. Normally £4.49 (for 4 servings), but £3.37 until 17 April.

Keep these on standby, too...

◆ Sainsbury's new Freefrom pouches are brilliantly quick, just 3 mins! The Spanish Style Beef Meatballs, £2.29, are well worth a try.

◆ Satisfy a sudden urge for a takeaway with the new Findus handy meals. Pour out the rice, sauce, veg and meat, mix and microwave... dinner's ready! £3.49 each.



Wheat & gluten free!

Bank holiday bakes

With all the long weekends we're having at the moment, it's a great excuse to keep naughty treats around – just in case someone drops in!



◆ Ooh, it's rich, dark, sensuous – no not some Adonis we've just spotted, we mean the new Gü Chocolate Brownie Cake. Why not really indulge and serve it warm with ice cream? £5.99 (serves 4) from Sainsbury's or £9.99 (serves 12) from Tesco.

◆ Mr Kipling's yummy Blackcurrant, Caramel or Strawberry Oatibakes, £1.29, have no artificial colours or flavours in them, so the kids won't be climbing up the curtains after just one!



100 years in the baking.



We've been a family baking business now for over a century so we know a great deal about baking. That's why we are passionate about everything we do, from baking powder to cake mixes, and why we're always striving to bring you the best. For example, our Fine Leaf Gelatine is the only Platinum Grade available in the supermarket. So if it's got the Dr. Oetker name on it, you can be sure of great results every time.



Quality is the best recipe

Find inspiring recipes and our complete product range at oetker.co.uk and shop at oetkeronline.co.uk

ON TEST

Pasta bake sauce

...and there's no need to pre-cook the pasta!



LOYD GROSSMAN AL FORNO CREAMY TOMATO SPINACH & RICOTTA

£1.99 for 400g from supermarkets Bung it all in one dish and 35 minutes later you've got a hearty dish with all the authentic tastes and smells of Italy... delicious!



ASDA CREAMY TOMATO

£1.18 for 500g Pasta bake is a fave with lots of families as it's so easy – and not cooking the pasta makes it even quicker. A simple tomatoey sauce with plenty of flavour and a nice thick consistency.



TESCO CREAMY TOMATO & HERB

£1 for 500g This is so delicious! Thick and creamy – it's got double cream in it and Cheddar, which is probably why it's so lovely and rich. You can really taste the herbs coming through.

All suitable for vegetarians

Secret shopper... Check out poundland.com for lots of top-name brands at bargain prices. I'm stocking up with Plum Baby Organic Superfoods, drinks for days out and store cupboard basics.



Food bites

Food Editor Jennifer Bedloe with hot new buys, ideas and tips



So pretty we just have to have them!

We love this gorgeous new collection from Joules at AGA, which includes oven gloves, gauntlets, aprons and tea towels in vintage florals and retro check prints – go on, treat yourself and pretty up your kitchen! Prices start at £3.95 for a tea towel from joulesclothing.com (0845 606 6871).

Drink news

Did you know half a pint of beer has less cals than a glass of wine or G&T? To celebrate I've rounded up some of the best 'girly' beers around...



Bacchus Framboises, £2.41 for 375ml, Sainsbury's Yum! It's a bit like a grown-up alcopop. Light and refreshing, but with a lovely tart raspberry flavour.



Kasteel Cru Rosé, £1.79 for 330ml, Morrisons A crisp-tasting, lightly sparkling lager. Go to bittersweetpartnership.com to see how to use it in some fab cocktails.



Badger Brewery Golden Champion, £1.34 for 500ml, Waitrose and Ocado A light golden ale that's crisp and fruity with a hint of elderflower – no doubt the fellas will love this one, too.



ON THE TABLE IN 10 MINS!

Too hungry to wait for the oven to heat up? No need to with this moreish snack – it's ready in an instant!

Top 1 soft flour **tortilla** with 4tbsp **tomato salsa**, sprinkle over 75g **tinned tuna**, drained, 2 **spring onions**, chopped, 55g **tinned sweetcorn**, ½ small **red pepper**, deseeded and chopped, and 75g **Edam cheese**, grated. Put another flour tortilla on top and press

down. Brush a large frying pan with oil, add the quesadilla and cook over a medium heat for 2–3 mins, until the cheese begins to melt. Flip over and cook for a further 2–3 mins. Transfer to a board and cut into wedges. Serve with a dish of guacamole on the side.

Whip up your own ice cream!

Nothing beats the taste of homemade ice cream – and nothing makes the job easier than this battery-operated*, compact machine:

- ◆ Simple to use with stop/start feature
- ◆ Makes two 350ml pots of ice cream in just 90 minutes.
- ◆ Easy-clean, streamline design.
- ◆ Only £12.95 + £2.99 p&p.

To order, and for terms and conditions, call 0871 421 6363** (please quote XES251 and product code H64295). Closing date 2 August 2010. **Calls cost a maximum of 5p per minute from a BT landline; mobile and other service providers' rates may vary.



essentials
MINI
OFFER

*REQUIRES 4XAA BATTERIES (NOT INCLUDED)

Get in touch... We pay £30 for every tip or recipe published. Email us at essentials_feedback@ipcmedia.com **essentials 95**

essentials Fantastic subscription offer!

12 issues for just

**PLUS YOUR
FREE GIFT SET
FROM St. Ives.**

WORTH
OVER
£30

**Get naturally beautiful and healthy looking skin
with a selection of goodies from St Ives...**

Your range of premium Microdermabrasion and warming scrubs, cleansing wipes and body lotion contain pure Swiss glacial water, soothing Swiss botanicals and naturally active ingredients that will work together to leave your skin soft, silky and ultra nourished.

Each St Ives gift set includes...

- Gentle Facial Cleansing Wipes
- Collagen Elastin Intensive Body Lotion
- Apricot Body Scrub
- Refreshing Facial Cleansing Wipes
- Apricot Body Scrub
- Elements Warming Scrub
- Elements Microdermabrasion

- ✓ Get a whole year
of *essentials* and
save **£12.50**
- ✓ Luxury of FREE
delivery every month!
- ✓ Never miss an issue again!



For more information
about St Ives products
visit stivesbeauty.co.uk

3 easy ways to pay

 Phone  Online  By Post

The Direct Debit Guarantee: This Guarantee is offered by all Banks and Building Societies that take part in the Direct Debit Scheme. The efficiency and security of the Scheme is monitored and protected by your own Bank or Building Society. If the amounts to be paid or the payment dates change, IPC Media Ltd. will notify you at least ten days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If an error is made by IPC Media Ltd. or your Bank or Building Society, you are guaranteed a full and immediate refund from your branch of the amount paid. You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your Bank or Building Society. Please also send a copy of the letter to us. Direct Debits can ONLY be paid through a Bank or Building Society. Your Direct Debit price will stay the same for one year from start date.

Spoil yourself or treat a friend...

£19.99

HURRY!
Offer closes
1 May
2010



Order hotline
**0845
123 1231**

Lines open 7 days a week 8am-9pm.
Please have your bank details ready. Quote code 11Z

or online at
www.magazinesdirect.com/iesde

I wish to subscribe for the following and receive my FREE St Ives gift worth over £30:

- ☐ £19.99 by annual Direct Debit, saving 38% on the full price of £32.50
Or if paying by debit card, credit card or cheque:
☐ 1 Year £22.75 saving 30% (full price £32.50)
☐ 2 Years £39 saving 40% (full price £65)

YOUR DETAILS

Mrs/Ms/Miss/Mr Forename

Surname

If you would like to receive emails from IPC and **essentials** containing news, special offers and product and service information and take part in our magazine research via email, please include your email address.

Email

Address

Postcode

Home Tel (inc. area code)

Would you like to receive messages to your mobile from IPC and **essentials** containing news, special offers, product and service information and take part in our research? If yes, please include your mobile phone number here.

Mobile

Year of Birth Y Y Y Y

TO GIVE A GIFT SUBSCRIPTION

Please fill out both the recipient's details below and the 'Your Details' section on the above. To give more than one subscription, please supply address details on a separate sheet.

Mrs/Ms/Miss/Mr Forename

Surname

Address

Postcode

If the person receiving the subscription is under 18, please write their year of birth here

Year of Birth Y Y Y Y

THREE EASY WAYS TO PAY

1. Simply complete the Direct Debit instruction below
2. I enclose a cheque/postal order made payable to IPC Media Ltd, for the amount of £
3. Please debit my ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Amex ☐ Maestro

Card Number (Maestro)

Expiry date / Issue no / Start date

Signature Date

(I am over 18)

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

For office use only. Originator's reference - 764 221

A/C no

Name of Bank

Address

Postcode

Account name

sort code account no.

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society: Please pay IPC Media Ltd. Direct Debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the safeguards assumed by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with IPC Media Ltd and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank or Building Society.

Signature Date

(I am over 18)

This offer is only open to new UK subscribers only. This offer is for a minimum term of 12 months and refunds cannot be issued during this initial period. This is discounted from the full subscription rates published in the magazine. The full subscription rate includes p&p. Gifts are subject to availability and will be delivered separately within 28 days, after your first payment has been taken. If you cancel your subscription within one year, IPC Media Ltd reserves the right to refund you for the unexpired portion of your subscription, less the value of your free gift. The closing date for this offer is 1st May 2010. **essentials** is published 12 times a year. Please allow up to six weeks for delivery of your first subscription issue. If the magazine order changes frequently per annum we will honour the number of issues paid for, not the term of the subscription. For enquiries and overseas rates please call +44 (0)845 123 1231, fax: +44 (0)845 675 9101 or email: ipcsubs@quadrantpubs.com. **essentials**, published by IPC Media Ltd (IPC), will collect your personal information to process your order. **essentials** and IPC would like to contact you by post or telephone to promote and ask your opinion on our magazines and services. Please tick here if you prefer not to hear from us. ☐ IPC may occasionally pass your details to carefully selected organisations so they can contact you by telephone or post with regards to promoting and researching their products and services. Please tick here if you prefer not to be contacted. ☐ IPC would like to send messages to your mobile with offers from carefully selected organisations and brands, promoting and researching their products and services. If you want to receive messages please tick here. ☐ IPC would like to email you with offers from carefully selected organisations and brands, promoting and researching their products and services. If you want to receive these messages please tick here. ☐

11Z

Return to: **essentials** Subscriptions, FREEPOST CY1061, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 3BR (No stamp required).

New

*bio
yogurt*

*crunchy
granola*



- ✓ **Low fat**
- ✓ **All from natural ingredients**
- ✓ **Tastes great at breakfast**



© and the shape of the twin pot are trade marks of the Müller Group

essentials Make it easy!

How to... spend less & live better!



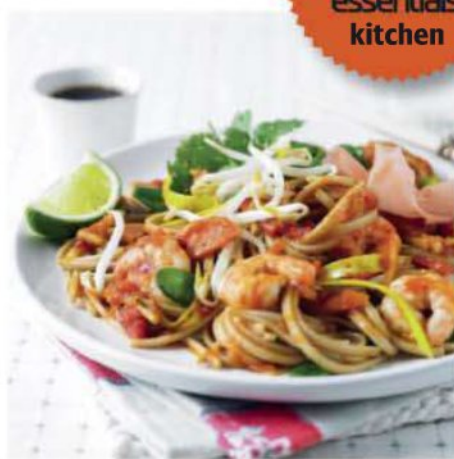
35+ new recipes to try

Our Food Editor Jen Bedloe says, 'Every recipe is tested and retested so it's foolproof. We cook our recipes in real time—so you can rest assured you'll get your dish on the table without having a meltdown!'

TRUST US!
Created for
you in the
essentials
kitchen



A laid-back bank holiday
feast for friends



Fast family meals for
every night... sorted!



Take it easy with our lazy
weekend ideas



Learn a new skill and
make perfect scones

PLUS



Grow it now, eat it
later... simple!



Your stress-free
kids' party guide



Make a special
memory box... aah!

'Chillax' with friends this spring

This boozy bank holiday feast is begging to be shared with friends. We've added in plenty of shortcuts so you can enjoy the night and still be a cooking goddess!

ALL RECIPES SERVE 6 HUNGRY PEOPLE
[UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED]

tip We found Agave Nectar – a low GI sugar substitute – in Tesco, Waitrose and Sainsbury's. It tastes great in cocktails. £2.46.

CAIPIRINHA COSMOS

Makes 6 • Ready in 10 mins + chilling • 120 cals per drink
Juice 6 limes into a large jug, add 2tbsp Agave Nectar (or 3tbsp caster sugar); stir until dissolved. Top up with 200ml pomegranate juice and 200ml cachaça or white rum. Add zest of 1 orange, pared into 4cm strips. Mix well and chill for a few hrs or overnight.

To serve, add lots of ice to the mix and stir for 2 mins. Pour into chilled Martini glasses and garnish with a strip of orange peel.

Spicy crab tortilla toasts

No time to fry up your own toasts? Just serve with a bag of tortilla chips then... easy!

Ready in 15 mins

• 218 cals per serving • 8g fat • 1g sat fat

- 2x170g tins white crab meat in brine, drained
- 6 spring onions, chopped
- ½-1tsp Very Lazy Red Chillies
- juice of 1 lime
- ½ small pack coriander, chopped
- 2tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- FOR THE TOASTS**
- 6 corn tortilla wraps
- 2tbsp olive oil
- flaked sea salt
- smoked hot paprika

1 Mix together all ingredients for crab and chill until needed. You can make this up to a day ahead, season with a little salt and extra lime juice, to taste, just before serving.

2 For the toasts, drizzle each tortilla with a little oil and fry them, over a medium heat, for 1-2 mins on each side until deep golden. Remove from the pan and sprinkle with a little sea salt and paprika, then cut into triangles before serving.

tip Make the chilli (without courgettes) a day ahead, for the flavours to intensify. On the day, add the courgettes and cook for the final 30 mins.

Divine pork chilli – so rich, so saucy,
so good – come on everyone,
form an orderly queue!

essentials
Make it easy!

tip If you want to make this veggie, swap the pork for meaty mushrooms and kidney beans.



Rich & saucy pork chilli

A new take on the traditional beef chilli recipe – you'll love it!

Ready in 2 hrs

• 327 cals per serving • 13g fat • 3g sat fat

- ☐ 3tbsp olive oil
- ☐ 1kg diced pork leg or shoulder meat
- ☐ 2 red onions, chopped
- ☐ 1tsp ground cumin
- ☐ ¼tsp smoked paprika
- ☐ ½tsp Very Lazy Red Chillies
- ☐ 1x500g jar medium-hot chilli con carne sauce
- ☐ 400g tin chopped tomatoes
- ☐ 1-2 courgettes, chopped
- ☐ handful fresh coriander, roughly chopped, to serve

1 In a casserole, heat 2tbsp **oil**, add the **pork** and cook until browned all over (you may need to do this in 2 batches). Remove from the pan. Add the remaining oil and the **onions** and cook for 5 mins until golden. Add the **spices** and cook for 1 min before returning the pork to the pan.

2 Pour in the jar of **chilli sauce**, rinsing out with about a quarter of a jar of water, and add the **tomatoes**. Simmer, loosely covered, for 1 hr, stirring occasionally, until the meat is tender. Add the **courgettes**, and cook for a further 30 mins. Stir through the **coriander**, and serve.

And to drink...



The delicious citrusy lime flavours of Villa Maria Private Bin Riesling 2008 go exceptionally well with spicy foods. £7.99, Waitrose, Threshers, and Majestic



Juicy red berries with vanilla and balsamic notes makes Cune Crianza Rioja 2006 the perfect choice to serve with the pork chilli. £7.99, Booths and Majestic or go to everywine.co.uk.

Fajita-style veggies

A quicky side dish to serve alongside the salad or as an alternative, if you prefer.

Ready in 40 mins

• 75 cals per serving • 4g fat • 0.5g sat fat

- ☐ 2x400g pack Mediterranean ready-to-roast vegetables
- ☐ 2tsp fajita seasoning

1 Heat oven to Mark 6/200°C. Mix the **vegetables** with the **fajita seasoning**, and roast for 35–40 mins.

Zingy avocado salsa salad

Way more substantial than a salsa – and the dressing is so addictive!

Ready in 20 mins

• 180 cals per serving • 14g fat • 3g sat fat

- ☐ 1 large red onion, peeled and cut into thin rounds
- ☐ juice of ½ lemon
- ☐ ½ tsp flaked sea salt
- ☐ 5 tomatoes, sliced
- ☐ 100g pack rocket
- ☐ 2 medium ripe avocados, halved, stoned, peeled, sliced and tossed in lemon or lime juice

FOR THE DRESSING

- ☐ 2tbsp sweet chilli sauce
- ☐ 2tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- ☐ 2tbsp lime juice

1 Mix the **red onion** with the **lemon juice** and **sea salt** and set aside for 10–15 mins, stirring once or twice. Rinse well with cold water and drain.

2 Whisk together the **dressing ingredients** and season. Arrange the salad ingredients in a bowl, and drizzle over a little dressing – serve the remainder on the side.

Really naughty cheesy Mexican rice

This super-tasty, super-cheating side dish is sure to become a family fave.

Ready in 25 mins

• 250 cals per serving • 6g fat • 4g sat fat

- ☐ 400g tin black eyed beans, rinsed and drained
- ☐ 2x250g packs microwave rice (or 200g rice, cooked until tender)
- ☐ 4 spring onions, finely chopped
- ☐ 200g tin chopped tomatoes
- ☐ 1tsp Very Lazy Red Chillies
- ☐ 1 small bunch coriander, roughly chopped
- ☐ 100g Cheddar, grated

1 Heat oven to Mark 6/200°C. Mix together **all the ingredients**, except the cheese, season well and spoon into a large ovenproof dish. Scatter with the **cheese** and bake for 20 mins, until golden.



You won't get better than these simple,
authentic dishes ... not even down Mexico way!

Fajita-style veggies

tip Serve up
your own mix of
vegetables – just
coat with olive oil
before roasting.

Zingy avocado salsa salad

Really naughty cheesy Mexican rice

tip To make
a really filling
veggie dish,
just add 500g
mushrooms,
fried until golden.

Key lime pie trifle

Did you think we'd run out of twists on a trifle...? Well, here's another – and it's fabulously easy.

Serves 8-10 • Ready in 15 mins • 688-550 cals per serving • 36-29g fat • 22-17g sat fat

- ▢ juice and zest of 8 limes
- ▢ 2x394g tin condensed milk
- ▢ 1 Madeira cake, thickly sliced
- ▢ 100g ginger nuts, crushed
- ▢ 300ml double cream, whipped
- ▢ 2 passion fruit, to decorate

1 Mix the **lime juice** and half the **zest** into the **condensed milk** – it will thicken instantly.

2 Arrange half the **cake** and some of the **ginger nuts** in a glass bowl. Top with half the condensed milk, then repeat with the rest of the cake and condensed milk. Top with **whipped cream** and decorate with **passion fruit** and some of the biscuits.

Grown-up
nursery
classic

tip For a classic key lime pie, pour half the condensed milk mixture into a pastry case and top with the whipped cream.

*Creamy, zesty, super yummy –
is this pud heaven? Yes, so grab a
spoon and start tucking in*

Lazy weekend all day brunch

Fancy a 'I'm-not-running-myself-ragged' couple of days? Then book some time in for the family to kick back and do not very much – with our fab recipes you won't be spending much time in the kitchen... but you will be eating extremely well!

tip This is really good with tuna or smoked chicken – or spread the cream cheese mix on a bagel... it's very moreish!

Stuffed salmon croissants

A quick and easy bite that's great for lunch, brunch or even your lunchbox.

Serves 4 • Ready in 10 mins
• 357 cals per serving • 17g fat • 8g sat fat

- ☐ 4 large all-butter croissants
- ☐ 150g light cream cheese
- ☐ 6 cherry tomatoes, chopped
- ☐ 8 large basil leaves, chopped
- ☐ 1tbsp capers, rinsed and chopped
- ☐ juice of ½ lemon
- ☐ 160g hot smoked salmon

- 1 Heat the oven to Mark 5/190°C. Warm the **croissants** in the oven, then remove and leave until cool enough to handle.
- 2 Mix together the **remaining ingredients**, except the salmon, and season. Fill each croissant with the cheese mixture and the **hot smoked salmon**.

Easy
10-minute
snack

essentials
**Make it
easy!**



New
family
fave

No-fry potato, mushroom & egg platter

Save yourself a few cals for something naughty later on and swap your usual weekend fry-up for this posh nosh version.

Serves 4 • Ready in 30 mins
• 400 cals per serving • 19g fat
• 5g sat fat

- ☐ 12 small potato rostis (we like Waitrose frozen rostis)
- ☐ good pinch cayenne pepper
- ☐ splash malt vinegar
- ☐ 4 very fresh free-range eggs
- ☐ 4 large portobello mushrooms (or 8 smaller ones)
- ☐ 2 tomatoes, halved
- ☐ 1tbsp olive oil
- ☐ 1tsp balsamic vinegar
- ☐ 15g butter
- ☐ 150g bacon lardons
- ☐ 1tbsp chopped fresh chives

1 Heat oven to Mark 5/200°C. Put **rostis** on a baking tray and sprinkle with **cayenne**; cook for 20 mins until golden and heated through. Bring a pan of water to simmering. Add the **vinegar** and swirl the water with a spoon. Break an **egg** into the centre of

the swirl and cook for 1–2 mins, until the white is set and the yolk is still wobbly. Transfer to a bowl of cold water and repeat.

2 Put **mushrooms** and **tomatoes** on separate baking trays. Drizzle tomatoes with **oil** and **balsamic** and season; cook for 10 mins. Drizzle mushrooms with oil, dot with **butter** and season. Cook in the oven for 8–10 mins, until tender. (Keep everything warm in the oven.)

3 Heat a small pan and fry the **bacon** until crispy. Add the eggs back to the pan of hot water and reheat for 30 secs. Divide rostis between 4 plates and top with a mushroom, a half of tomato, bacon, a poached egg; season with **chives** and salt and pepper.

Italian-style beany sausage toast toppers

So easy, but who needs to know... this will leave everyone with full tummies.

Serves 4 • Ready in 30 mins
• 623 cals per serving • 27g fat
• 10g sat fat

- ☐ ½tbsp olive oil, plus extra for brushing
- ☐ 400g pack chipolatas, halved if long
- ☐ 1 onion, chopped
- ☐ 400g tin cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- ☐ 400g tin chopped tomatoes
- ☐ 120g pack sun-blush tomatoes
- ☐ 1tbsp thick balsamic vinegar
- ☐ 275g ciabatta loaf, sliced
- ☐ 1tbsp chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- ☐ about 4 large basil leaves, torn

1 Heat the **olive oil** in a large casserole dish and cook the **sausages**, turning occasionally, until browned. Add the **onion** and continue cooking for about 5 mins.

2 Add the **beans** and **tinned tomatoes** and bring to the boil. Turn the heat down and add the **sun-blush tomatoes** and **balsamic**. Simmer for about 15 mins, until the sauce has thickened and the sausages are cooked through.

3 Toast the **bread** or, if you have time, brush with the olive oil and griddle on both sides until toasted. Stir the **herbs** into the beans and serve up with toast and let everyone dive in.

tip If you have a thin balsamic vinegar, add 1tsp sugar to the sauce to bring out the tomatoey flavours.

tip To get your poached eggs perfect, always use really fresh eggs – the whites of older ones will disintegrate in the water while they're cooking.



tip These are great for larger numbers. Just get them all prepped, then pop in the oven when you're ready to eat.

Ham 'n' cheese pancake stack

These will give you the New York diner experience... at home!

Serves 4 • Ready in 10 mins

• 561 cals per serving • 42g fat • 19g sat fat

- ☐ 100g bag baby spinach leaves
- ☐ pack 8 buttermilk pancakes
- ☐ 4 slices cooked ham
- ☐ 100g grated Cheddar
- ☐ ½tbsp olive oil
- ☐ 1tbsp frozen chopped shallots
- ☐ 100ml double cream
- ☐ 1tsp wholegrain mustard
- ☐ 1tsp Dijon mustard

1 Heat oven to Mark 6/200°C. Put **spinach** into a pan with a splash of water. Put a lid on and cook over a low heat until the spinach

has wilted. Drain.

2 Put the **pancakes** on a baking tray, divide the spinach between 4 of them and top each with a slice of **ham** and grated **Cheddar**. Warm in the oven for 5 mins, or until the cheese has melted. Heat the **oil** in a pan and cook the **shallots** for 1 min. Add the **cream** and **mustards**, season and gently warm.

3 Lay a pancake on top of each cheese pancake and serve with the sauce.

Don't want to be too naughty? Try these healthy options

BERRY BLITZER

Makes 4 large glasses • Ready in 5 mins • 84 cals per serving
• 0g fat • 0g sat fat

Put 2 large peeled oranges, a 380g pack frozen summer berries, 1 piece stem ginger in syrup and 2tbsp syrup from the jar into a blender. Whizz until smooth, then taste for sweetness and add 1-2tbsp honey.

MINTY FRUIT SALAD

Serves 4 with leftovers • Ready in 10mins + marinating time • 324 cals per serving
• 6g fat • 3g sat fat

1 Put 1 pineapple and 1 mango, both peeled and cut into chunks, 2 oranges, peeled and cut into segments, and a 500g pack red and green grapes in a large serving bowl and mix with 3tbsp demerara sugar and 2tbsp chopped fresh mint.

2 Leave overnight or make up at least 1 hr ahead to let the juices run out and the flavours mingle. Mix 1tbsp maple syrup into 250g Greek yogurt and serve with the fruit salad.

NUTTY BANANA CHEWY BARS

Makes 15 • Ready in 40 mins
• 213 cals per serving • 9g fat • 0.6g sat fat

1 Heat oven to Mark 4/180°C. Grease and line a 20x30cm Swiss roll tin with baking parchment. Put 3tbsp sunflower oil, 50g golden syrup and 125g honey in a pan. Mash 400g (peeled weight) ripe bananas; add to the pan with 100g sultanas or raisins. Simmer for 10 mins, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking.

2 Mix 275g rolled porridge oats with ½ tsp ground cinnamon, 3tbsp cornflour and 50g each of hazelnuts and pecans, chopped. Pour in the banana mix and stir well. Spoon into the tin, spread out and smooth the surface. Bake for 20 mins until golden. Remove from oven and cool in the tin. Cut into bars using a sharp knife.

Light & lovely apricot roulade

You can't beat a roulade for a wow-factor pud! And this one's easier to make and lower in cals than you think!

Only
332
cals!

Light-as-a-feather sponge with lots
of fruity cream – mmmmm!

Creamy apricot roulade

Ready in 30 mins + cooling time • 332 cals per serving • 20g fat • 8g sat fat

FOR THE CAKE

- 25g flaked almonds
- 3 medium free-range eggs
- 100g caster sugar
- 1tsp vanilla extract
- 55g plain flour
- 55g ground almonds
- ½tsp baking powder
- 1tbsp icing sugar

FOR THE FILLING

- 200ml whipping cream, whipped to soft peaks
- 150g pot Greek yogurt
- 1x410g tin apricots, drained and sliced
- 2tbsp icing sugar, plus 1tsp for dusting
- 2-3tbsp orange liqueur

1 Heat the oven to Mark 4/180°C. Line a 22x31cm (approx) baking tray with non-stick baking paper. Scatter the base with **flaked almonds**. Whisk the **eggs, sugar** and **vanilla extract** in a large bowl until thick and creamy and the mixture leaves a ribbon trail on the surface. Fold in the **plain flour, ground almonds** and **baking powder**. Pour the mixture into the prepared tin and bake for 15-18 mins, until golden and spongy to the touch.

2 Cool the sponge for a few mins, then turn out onto a larger sheet of non-stick baking paper – leave to cool before carefully removing the cooking baking paper. Meanwhile, mix together the **filling ingredients**. Once the sponge has cooled, spread with the cream filling, then carefully roll, using the lining paper, from the short end. Don't worry if it cracks. Transfer to a large plate and dust with **icing sugar**.

Get ahead by making the sponge the day before. Roll up while warm and wrap in foil. Add filling before serving.

It's not as wicked as it looks – go on, have a slice!

Try these other fruity & not-too-naughty puds...

TROPICAL PAVLOVA

For when you crave a pud, but want to keep your diet halo intact!

Ready in 10 mins • 190 cals per serving • 3g fat • 2g sat fat

SERVES 6



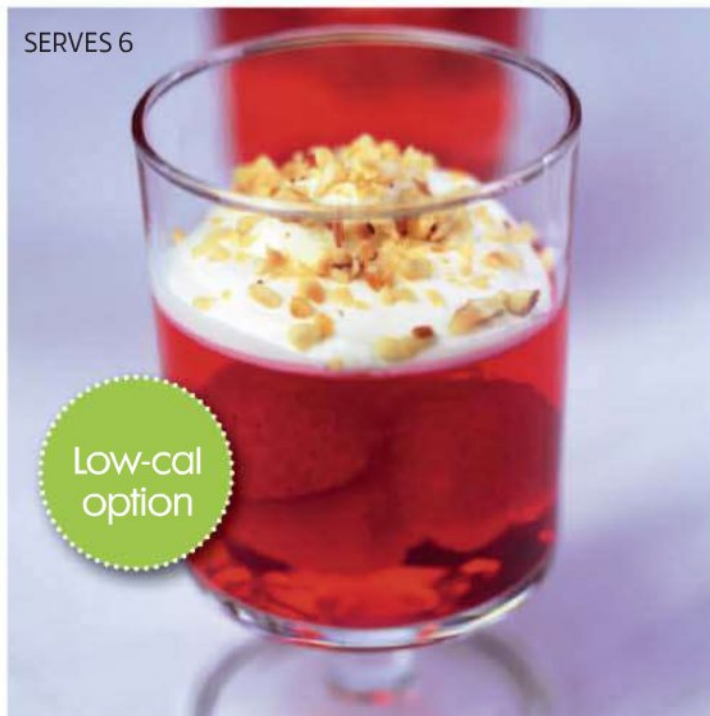
1 Put a 25cm, ready-made **meringue nest** on a serving plate. Spoon on 300g **5% fat Greek yogurt**. Peel and slice 1 large ripe **mango** and whizz one-third in a food processor until smooth. Mix the mango purée with the scooped out flesh of 3 **passion fruits**.
2 Scatter the remaining sliced mango over the yogurt. Add 2 **kiwis**, peeled and sliced, and 250g **strawberries**, sliced. Drizzle with the mango and passion fruit sauce.

VERY-BERRY JELLY

Your diet's new best friend – a truly guilt-free pud!

Ready in 15 mins + chilling • 108 cals per serving • 4g fat • 1.5g sat fat

SERVES 6



Low-cal
option

1 Warm 450ml **cranberry and raspberry juice drink** with 2tbsp **caster sugar** in a pan, until hot. Do not boil. In a small bowl, soak 4 leaves **gelatine** for 5 mins, then stir the soft leaves into the warm liquid until dissolved. Pour into 6 small chilled glasses.
2 Scatter 50g **berries** into each glass and chill in the fridge for 3 hrs or until set. To serve, top each jelly with 1tbsp **half-fat crème fraîche** and ½tsp chopped toasted **hazelnuts**. Keeps for up to two days.

NEXT MONTH... Something chocolatey

Fast family meals

ALL NEW FAVOURITES

These recipes will tempt them during the week – and make life easier for you, too. We've even worked out the fat, cals and cost, so you don't have to

ALL RECIPES SERVE 4
UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED

£2.69 per person

Chunky fish goujons with pea & pesto mash

OK, so this is still the nursery favourite of fish fingers, mash and peas, but it's a whole lot posher! Fancy a glass of wine tonight?

Ready in 30 mins • 600 cals per serving • 31g fat • 4.5g sat fat • 1 of your 5-a-day

BUY FRESH...

- ☐ 4x125g skinless, boneless salmon fillets
- ☐ 240g mixed mangetout and sugar snap peas



CHECK YOU'VE GOT....

- ☐ 40g dry white breadcrumbs
- ☐ 25g Parmesan, grated
- ☐ 1 free-range egg, beaten
- ☐ 650g pack mashed potato
- ☐ 1tbsp olive oil
- ☐ 200g frozen peas
- ☐ 75g pesto
- ☐ tartare sauce, to serve (optional)

How to...

1 Heat the grill to medium. Mix the **breadcrumbs** and **Parmesan** and season well. Slice the **salmon** into 1.5cm-thick slices, dip into the beaten **egg**, then roll in the crumbs to coat. Put on a heavy baking tray and grill for 10–12 mins, turning occasionally.

2 Meanwhile, heat the **mash** as pack instructions. Steam the **mangetout** and **sugar snaps** for 4–5 mins. Put the **oil**, **frozen peas** and 1tbsp water in a saucepan, cover with a lid and cook for 3–4 mins, until the peas are tender. Crush with a potato masher, then stir in the **pesto**. Swirl the hot mashed potato through and serve with the salmon goujons, steamed veggies and **tartare sauce**, if liked.

essentials
**Make it
easy!**

tip Fry sliced Quorn sausages, add a jar of spicy tomato sauce and serve with pasta – delish!

£1.83 per person

Veggie hot dogs with crunchy slaw

Everything you need for a perfectly easy Friday TV dinner and potato wedges, too! Pass the remote...

Ready in 20 mins • 500 cals per serving • 23g fat • 7g sat fat • 2 of your 5-a-day

BUY FRESH...

- ☐ 750 potato wedges, to serve
- ☐ 4 Quorn sausages
- ☐ 200g Chinese leaf, shredded
- ☐ 4 crusty rolls, or a sliced baguette
- ☐ 100g bag rocket (optional)



CHECK YOU'VE GOT....

- ☐ 3tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- ☐ 2 red onions, peeled and sliced
- ☐ 1tbsp thick balsamic vinegar
- ☐ 2 medium carrots, peeled and coarsely grated
- ☐ 1tbsp wholegrain mustard
- ☐ 150g Greek yogurt or reduced-fat mayo

How to...

- 1** Cook the **wedges** according to pack instructions. Heat 2tbsp of the **oil** in a large frying pan, add the **onion** and cook over a medium heat for 15 mins, until deep golden and sticky. Stir in the **balsamic vinegar** and cook for a further 2-3 mins.
- 2** In a separate pan, heat the remaining oil and cook the **sausages** until browned all over, approx 10 mins.
- 3** For the slaw, mix together **Chinese leaf**, **carrot**, **mustard**, **yogurt** or mayo, reserving a little for serving, and season. To serve, slice open each **roll** or baguette, fill with sausage, onions, a dab of mayo and some **rocket**, and have the wedges and slaw on the side.

Tasty, satisfying and good for you, too – more please!

tip The garnish really makes this dish, but if you haven't got this exact mix, use shredded spring onion, peppers and parsley instead.



£2.67 per person

Fresh 'n' saucy prawn noodles

Fed up with dry noodle dishes? Then give this one a whirl – its juicy fresh flavours will really perk you up.

Ready in 20 mins • 254 cals per serving • 8g fat • 1g sat fat • 2 of your 5-a-day

BUY FRESH...

- ☐ 2 small carrots, peeled and sliced
- ☐ 100g mangetout
- ☐ 1 trimmed leek, cut into 10cm strips
- ☐ 30g root ginger, peeled and shredded
- ☐ 275g fresh tomatoes, chopped
- ☐ 400g raw peeled prawns, defrosted if frozen



CHECK YOU'VE GOT....

- ☐ 250g udon noodles
- ☐ 2tbsp sesame oil
- ☐ 2tsp Very Lazy Lemongrass
- ☐ 1½tsp Very Lazy Chilli
- ☐ 2tsp Thai fish sauce
- ☐ 1tsp sugar
- ☐ pickled ginger, coriander leaves, lime wedges and beansprouts, to garnish

How to...

1 Cook the **noodles** according to pack instructions, refresh under cold water and drain well. Heat half the **oil** in a large wok, add the **carrots, mangetout** and **leek** and stir-fry for 3–4 mins, until almost tender; remove from the wok and set aside.

2 Add the remaining oil to the wok and cook the **lemongrass, chilli** and **ginger** for 1 min. Add the **tomatoes, fish sauce** and **sugar** and cook for 3 mins, until the tomatoes have broken down. Add the **prawns**, and cook for 4–5 mins, stirring, then mix in the vegetables and noodles and heat through. Before serving, top with the **garnishes**.

essentials
**Make it
easy!**

Who'd have thought jacket spuds could be this special?!

tip Vary the filling with your favourite veg, or use sausage chunks instead of chicken.

£1.59 per person

Meal-in-one chicken & sweetcorn jackets

Give jacket spuds this gorgeous makeover, using up meat from your Sunday roast.

Ready in 30 mins • 483 cals per serving • 16g fat • 7g sat fat • 1 of your 5-a-day

BUY FRESH...

- ☐ 4 medium baking potatoes, each about 250g
- ☐ 2 red peppers, deseeded, chopped
- ☐ 200g cooked chicken, shredded
- ☐ 4 spring onions, sliced
- ☐ handful flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped



CHECK YOU'VE GOT....

- ☐ 1tbsp olive oil
- ☐ 198g tin sweetcorn, drained
- ☐ 4tbsp single cream
- ☐ 2tbsp milk
- ☐ 75g Cheddar, grated

How to...

1 Heat oven to Mark 8/230°C. Prick each **potato** with a fork. Microwave on high for about 15 mins, turning once, or until tender. Leave to cool for a few mins, then halve and scoop out the inside, leaving a layer of potato. Reserve the scooped out potato.

2 Meanwhile, fry the **peppers** in the **oil** for 5–6 mins, then add the **chicken** and **spring onions**, and cook for 2 mins to heat through. Stir in the **sweetcorn** and **cream** and season well. Put the potato skins on a baking tray. Mash the reserved potato with the **milk**, add the chicken and peppers and **parsley**, then spoon into the skins. Top with the **Cheddar** and bake for 10 mins until golden and bubbling.



tip You don't have to bake this pasta, just serve up and skip the rest of the cheese. It tastes lovely with ham instead of bacon or, for a meat-free meal, just leave out the bacon.

£1.94 per person

Baby veg & bacon pasta bake

Tender spring veg, smothered in a creamy sauce, makes a tempting one-pot supper they'll all love.

Ready in 30 mins • 700 cals per serving • 37g fat • 17g sat fat • 1 of your 5-a-day

BUY FRESH...

- ☐ 200g smoked bacon lardons
- ☐ 150g baby carrots, chopped
- ☐ 125g broad beans, fresh or frozen
- ☐ 100g baby leeks, chopped
- ☐ 150g baby fennel, chopped
- ☐ 200ml single cream



CHECK YOU'VE GOT....

- ☐ 1tbsp olive oil
- ☐ 1tbsp Dijon mustard
- ☐ 100ml milk
- ☐ 300g dried pasta, use your favourite shape
- ☐ 75g Gruyère cheese, grated
- ☐ 40g Parmesan, finely grated

How to...

1 Heat the oven to Mark 6/200°C. Heat the **oil** in a large saucepan and cook the **bacon** for 3–4 mins, until it releases some fat. Add the **vegetables** and cook for 2 mins. Add 2tbsp water, cover with a lid, and cook over a medium heat for 6–8 mins until tender.

2 Stir in the **mustard**, **cream** and **milk** to the vegetables, season well and simmer for 3 mins. Meanwhile, boil the **pasta** for 2 mins less than pack instructions, drain and mix with the sauce. Stir in half the **cheeses** and pour into a large ovenproof dish. Scatter over the remaining cheese, and bake for 15 mins.

essentials
**Make it
easy!**



MEAL 1 £1.55 per person

Moroccan spiced lamb & couscous

Tuck into this juicy roast with zingy-flavoured couscous on day one...

Ready in 40 mins + resting • 404 cals per serving
• 19g fat • 6g sat fat • 0 of your 5-a-day

1 Heat the oven to Mark 6/200°C. Put a 750–800g butterflied **lamb leg joint** in a small roasting tin, rub all over with 1tbsp **oil**, and 1tbsp **ras-el-hanout spice mix**. Roast for 40 mins (or longer if you prefer your meat well done). Leave to rest for about 15 mins, before slicing.

2 Put 220g **couscous** in a large bowl, season well, and mix in the zest of 1 **lemon**. Pour over 250ml boiling vegetable **stock**, cover with clingfilm, and leave for 5–6 mins. Fluff up grains with a fork, then stir in 2tbsp **extra virgin olive oil**, the juice of 1 **lemon**, a few sprigs each flat-leaf **parsley** and **mint**, roughly chopped, and 100g reduced-fat **feta**, crumbled. Serve with half the lamb, sliced.

Cook once, eat twice!

MEAL 2 £1.64 per person

Spicy lamb & aubergine filo pie

Next day, make the most of all those great spices with this Med-inspired pie.

Ready in 30 mins • 376 cals per serving
• 26g fat • 6g sat fat • 1 of your 5-a-day

1 Heat oven to Mark 7/220°C. Mix 1 large **aubergine**, cut into 1.5cm dice, with 2tbsp **oil**, and put on a large baking tray. Grill for 15 mins, turning often, until golden.

2 Simmer 400g tin chopped **tomatoes** with 1tsp **ras-el-hanout** and ½tsp **ground cumin** for 5 mins, until thickened slightly. Stir in 2tbsp **toasted pine nuts**, a few sprigs **parsley**, chopped, and the remaining **lamb**, roughly chopped. Simmer for 5 mins.

3 Transfer to a 1.5-litre dish or 4x300ml baking dishes. Brush 2 large sheets **filo** with a little **olive oil**, lay the sheets onto the filling, scrunching lightly to fit the dish. Sprinkle with 1tsp **sesame seeds**, and bake for 10 mins, until crisp.

tip A can of drained chickpeas will bulk out your meal on day two if your hungry hordes ate seconds of roast lamb on day one.



Cook perfect scones ...every time!

Sweet or savoury, a scone always hit the mark, and what's more they're dead easy to make. Check out our fabulous recipes and step-by-step guide

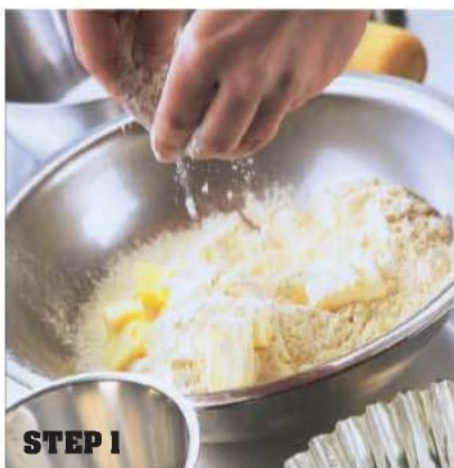
Try this
super-size
scone
cake



*A feast of cream and cherry
gorgeousness that no one will be able
to resist – better get your slice quick!*

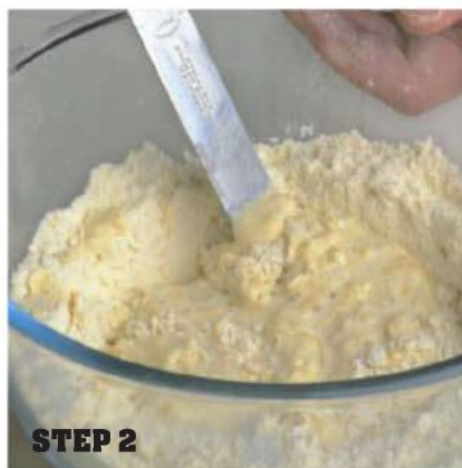
How to make your Basic Scone Mix

It's so easy to rustle up a scone-based recipe and the technique is the same whether you're making something sweet or savoury. Each recipe has its own little twists, so watch out for changes in the ingredients you'll need.



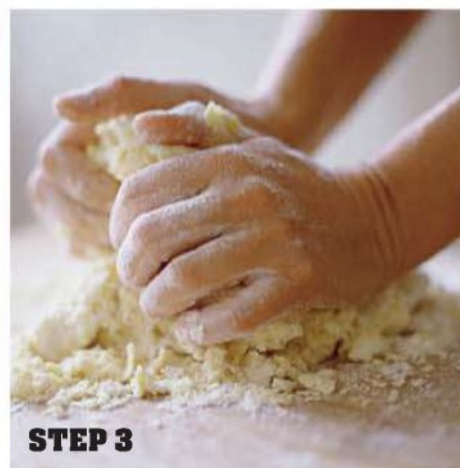
STEP 1

Sift 250g **self-raising flour** and ½tsp **baking powder** (except the scone pizza recipe) into a large bowl. Rub 50g chilled **butter**, cubed, into the flour until it resembles fine breadcrumbs.



STEP 2

Stir in the **golden caster sugar** (see cherry/blueberry scone recipes for quantities). Make a well in the centre and add the **liquid** (see all recipes for quantities). Mix with a palette knife until the mixture comes together to form a soft dough.



STEP 3

Lightly knead the mix together until the dough is smooth. Turn out onto a lightly floured work top and you're ready to get rolling or cutting.

It helps to know...

Perfect scones require a good cutting technique...

- 1 Ensure your dough is at least 2cm thick. Dip your cutter in a little flour, then put it on the dough.
- 2 Using the palm of your hand, press down smoothly and quickly – don't be tempted to twist or wriggle the cutter because the dough sticks together and doesn't rise neatly when cooking.



Now you can make this...

Clotted cream & cherry scone cake

This has to be the fastest cake we've ever made – and what's more it tastes divine. Afternoon tea, anyone?

Serves 8 • Takes 10 mins + 20 mins baking time
• 423 cals per serving • 23g fat • 15g sat fat

- ☐ 50g golden caster sugar
- ☐ 100g dried cherries
- ☐ 150ml buttermilk, plus extra for brushing
- TO SERVE**
- ☐ 425g tin cherries in syrup, drained well
- ☐ 227g tub clotted cream
- ☐ caster sugar, for dusting

◆ Heat the oven to Mark 7/220°C. Grease and base line an 18cm round, loose-based cake tin. Follow **Basic Scone Mix step 1**.

◆ Continue with **Basic Scone Mix step 2**, stirring in the **sugar** and **dried cherries**, then follow **Basic Scone Mix step 3**.

◆ Press the dough into the cake tin, brush with buttermilk and bake for 20 mins, until light golden. Cool for 5 mins, before moving to a wire rack to cool completely.

◆ To serve, dry the tinned **cherries** on kitchen paper to remove excess syrup.



Who needs to go out for a cream tea?

Using a sharp knife, slice the scone cake in half horizontally, then spread each cut half with **clotted cream**, leaving a 1cm margin from the edge. Put the bottom half on a serving plate, and top with cherries, add the top layer and chill for at least 1 hr for the cream to firm up. Dust with **caster sugar** just before serving.

Why not try these other ideas ...

Vanilla blueberry scones

The cream gives a rich flavour and golden colour to these sweet treats!

Makes 8-10 • Ready in 25 mins
• 188-150 cals per serving
(excluding crème fraîche and jam)
• 8-6g fat • 5-4g sat fat

- ☐ 30g golden caster sugar
- ☐ few drops of vanilla extract
- ☐ 4tbsp of milk mixed with 2tbsp double cream
- ☐ crème fraîche and blueberry compote or jam, to serve

◆ Heat the oven to Mark 7/220°C. Follow **Basic Scone Mix step 1**.

◆ Continue with **Basic Scone Mix step 2**, stirring in the sugar, vanilla extract and milk and cream mix then follow **Basic Scone Mix step 3**.

◆ Roll out the dough to about 2cm thick. Using a 6cm cutter stamp out as many discs as you can and pop on to a baking tray; dust with flour. Bake for 12-15 mins until golden and risen. Serve with **crème fraîche** and **blueberry compote** or **jam**.

It helps to know...
If your dough is dry to the touch just add more liquid – you want the dough to be pliable and not crumbly.

tip To make a quick compote, slowly warm 75g blueberries in a pan with 40g caster sugar until the berries burst. Cook for 3 mins, then add another 75g blueberries. Heat for 1 min, then cool.

tip Cheddar and red onion, sun-dried tomato and basil, and smoked bacon and sage are all great combos to try.

Goats' cheese & red pepper mini scones

A chilled glass of wine and a savoury snack! These are a doddle to make, but are sure to impress your friends.

Makes about 24 • Ready in 25 mins
• 72 cals per serving • 3.5g fat
• 1.9g sat fat

- ☐ large pinch of cayenne pepper
- ☐ ½tsp English mustard powder
- ☐ 75g goats' cheese, crumbled
- ☐ roasted red peppers in oil, drained and finely chopped
- ☐ 1 medium free-range egg
- ☐ 100ml milk

◆ Heat oven to Mark 7/220°C. Follow **Basic Scone Mix step 1**.

◆ Continue with **Basic Scone Mix step 2**, stirring in the cayenne pepper, mustard powder, goats' cheese and roasted red peppers and season well. Crack the egg into a measuring jug, top up with milk and add to the mixture.

◆ Follow **Basic Scone Mix step 3**, then roll out to a thickness of about 2cm. Using a 3cm cutter, stamp out as many scones as you can from the mix, re-rolling the dough in between until you have used it all up. Transfer to a baking tray, brush with a little milk and bake for 10-12 mins until golden brown.

tip Don't go OTT with the toppings, you should have each pizza just covered, otherwise you can end up with a soggy base.



Fast scone 'pizza'

This cheats' scone pizza base is just the ticket for a fakeaway pizza night.

Serves 4 • Ready in 25 mins

• 523 cals per serving

• 28g fat • 17g sat fat

☐ ½tsp salt

☐ 1 free-range egg

☐ 2-3tbsp milk

FOR THE TOPPING

☐ 4tbsp pizza topping sauce

☐ 125g ball mozzarella, torn and patted dry

☐ 100g Dolcelatte or Gorgonzola, cubed

☐ 40g Parmesan shavings

☐ 1 medium courgette, shaved into ribbons

☐ 2 sprigs basil, leaves only, reserve a few leaves for garnish

◆ Heat oven to Mark 7/220°C.

Follow **Basic Scone Mix step 1**, stirring in ½tsp salt.

◆ Continue with **Basic Scone Mix step 2**, adding the egg and milk together, then follow **Basic Scone Mix step 3**.

◆ Divide the dough in half and roll out each piece on a lightly floured surface into a round about ½cm thick. Transfer to 2 large baking trays.

◆ Spread bases with the **pizza topping sauce**, then scatter the **remaining ingredients** on top. Bake in the oven for 15 mins until golden. Garnish with basil leaves.

It helps to know...

Unlike the other recipes, the dough for this pizza needs to be rolled out nice and thin so when it rises it doesn't taste too stodgy.



Tattie scones

A super-savoury version of the scone – with the addition of mashed potato. Serve them up with eggs and bacon or as a naughty lunchtime cheese toastie.

Makes 12-14 pancakes

• Ready in 25 mins • 619 cals per pancake • 27g fat • 12g sat fat

☐ 2 medium baking potatoes, pricked with a fork

☐ 3tbsp milk

☐ 125g plain flour

☐ 50g chilled butter, cubed, plus 25g for frying

☐ few thyme leaves, chopped

☐ 2tbsp olive or sunflower oil

◆ Microwave the potatoes until tender, cool slightly and peel. Mash 250g of the potato flesh in a bowl with milk. Rub flour and butter together to form fine breadcrumbs and mix through mash. Stir in a pinch of salt, the thyme leaves, black pepper and the potato.

◆ Knead lightly to form a soft dough, you may need to add an extra 1tbsp milk. On a floured surface roll out the dough to a thickness of about ½cm and cut into 10cm rounds using a cutter

◆ Heat the oil and butter in a non-stick flat pan and cook the scones for 1-2 mins on each side until golden brown. Top 2-3 pancakes with sliced chicken and the **tomato & sweetcorn salsa**.

It helps to know...

Don't be tempted to use boiled potatoes or bought mash for this recipe. You need the potato to be as dry as possible. If you don't have a microwave, just bake the potatoes. These pancakes can be cooked ahead of time and kept warm in the oven.



TOMATO & SWEETCORN SALSA

Quarter 125g cherry tomatoes and mix with a 198g tin sweetcorn, drained, 1tbsp extra virgin olive oil, 1tsp red wine vinegar, a few sprigs flat-leaf parsley, chopped, and ½ small red onion, finely chopped.

NEXT MONTH... Perfect shortcrust pastry

BEST IN SEASON

Broad beans

Indulge in this season's fab new flavours...
the warm weather is on its way!

**PLUMP & TENDER
BRITISH BROAD BEANS**

They're only around until August, so grab them while you can. Buy pods that look fresh and soft, not blackened or dry. Avoid older, larger pods as the beans will be tougher. Store in a cool place and use within days. They're a great source of fibre, vitamin A and C, potassium and iron.

Make this!

Broad beans with a spicy kick

How's this for a posh Mediterranean twist on a good old British vegetable? Looks good enough to grace a Spanish tapas bar...

Serves 4 • Ready in 10 mins

132 cals per serving • 6.5g fat • 2.5g sat fat

Blanch 1kg fresh podded **broad beans** in boiling salted water for 2 mins or cook 300g frozen beans for 2-3 mins. Drain and refresh under cold running water. If you prefer, remove the outer skins; it doesn't take long and they look lovely – all green and shiny. In a hot pan, fry 100g **chorizo**, cut into bite-sized chunks and once some of the oil has released, add 2 cloves **garlic**, chopped. Fry for 2 mins then add a splash of dry **sherry**. Season lightly with salt and a squeeze of lemon. Add the beans, mix, serve immediately and enjoy with the sherry, well chilled!

essentials
Make it easy!



Have you heard of samphire?

Marsh samphire grows along UK shorelines, and can be bought from greengrocers and fishmongers. It's a stalky green vegetable that really tastes of the sea, with a salty iodine flavour, so it's the perfect partner for fish. Simply steam for a few minutes and toss with butter or stir fry briefly to preserve its crisp texture and distinctive taste.

New idea for Beetroot

Try this stunning hot baked beetroot side.

Serves 4 • Ready in 10 mins

121 cals per serving • 8g fat • 1g sat fat





Heat oven to Mark 4/180°C. Scrub 4 **beetroots**, trim stalks (reserve leaves and stalks). Put in a foil parcel, with a splash of water. Seal and bake for 1 hr until tender. Slip off skins under cold water and cut in half. Toss with 1tbsp **sherry vinegar**, 2 **shallots**, finely chopped, 2tbsp extra virgin **olive oil**, 2tbsp **pomegranate molasses** and season. Cut leaves and stalks into 8cm lengths, stir-fry in 1tbsp **olive oil** for 1 min, add 2tbsp water and cook for 2 mins more. Add the beetroot and serve with roast meat or oily fish.

tip Buy beetroot no larger than an egg, with their young green leaves attached.



Also in season...

Put these seasonal treats in your shopping basket this month

	✓ STORE	✓ TRY	✓ USE IT UP
New potatoes 	Store in a paper bag in a cool dark place. Use within a few days of purchase – they'll be easier to scrape.	Boil until tender, cut in half and mix with crème fraîche, mustard and chopped mint.	Roast sliced potatoes with lemon zest, unpeeled garlic cloves and rosemary.
Watercress  <small>BRITISH WATERCRESS WEEK 16-23 MAY</small>	Store damp leaves in an airtight container in the fridge and use within five days for maximum freshness.	Make a peppery salsa with chopped watercress, capers, lemon zest and olive oil. Or add to salads, tarts or creamy pasta sauces.	Whizz into a vibrant soup with hot stock, cooked potato, single cream and black pepper.
Crab 	The freshest way to buy crab is live, but if you can't bear that, buy one ready cooked and dressed from a good fishmonger. Chill, and eat within two days of purchase.	Its delicate flavour needs nothing more than bread and butter and a squeeze of fresh lemon juice.	Crab makes delicious fritters mixed with beaten egg, lime zest and a little fresh chilli, then fried in spoonfuls until golden brown.
Radishes 	Trim off leaves, rinse, shake off excess water, and store in an airtight container in the fridge. Use within a week.	Grate radishes and mix with softened butter and parsley. Add a spoonful onto pan-fried steak.	Pan fry whole radishes in a little olive oil and butter until golden. Season, add a squeeze of lemon and serve with pork or chicken.

New season Strawberries

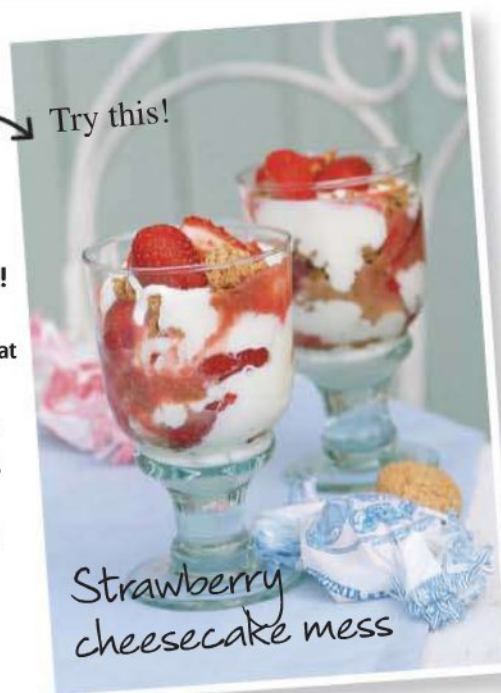
On 1 May the strawberry season officially starts – and we always thought it was June. Time to indulge!

Serves 4 • Ready in 15 mins

415 cals per serving • 25g fat • 10g sat fat

Slice 300g **strawberries** and mix with ½tsp **vanilla extract** and ½tbsp **amaretto**. Set aside. Using a blender, whizz 100g strawberries with 1tbsp **caster sugar** until smooth, then pass through a sieve into a jug. Whisk together 200g half-fat **soft cheese**, 150ml double **cream**, and 2tbsp **icing sugar** until thick. Layer up the cheesecake cream, mashed strawberries, sauce and 16 **ratafia biscuits**, roughly crumbled, between 4 glasses and serve.

Try this!



Strawberry cheesecake mess

GADGET

Oxo Good Grips Strawberry huller makes prepping your straws a cinch! £4.89, from lakeland.co.uk.



What to sow & grow right now...

...to enjoy eating throughout the whole year! Our foolproof guide makes it so simple, using just a few pots or a patch in the garden

It's a big trend – everyone wants home-grown, tastier veg. Great for those of us trying to shed a few pounds, as an average 30 minutes' work in the garden burns 200-360 calories! But it's due to better veg and money saved that so many join the ranks of 'grow-your-own'. And it really is simple: follow our guide and, once they're planted, you just need to water and feed them.

It's this easy!

Getting started

1 The best space Any unused part of your garden as long as it's not in shade will do; the sunnier the better. A large garden can accommodate space-hogging veg like pumpkin and parsnips, but a small garden needs space-saving types that produce lots of veg quickly.

2 Pots, growbags & raised beds

Vegetables grow in anything that can hold water, but make sure the container has drainage holes covered with gravel or broken pots. If you have poor soil or clay, use raised beds (£13 each at harrodhorticultural.com). Plant bags are a good option for the patio – just fold away when not in use. Pack of three, £11.95; or a potato bag, £4.95, from primrose-london.co.uk. Growbags are a cheap option,



from £1.58 at B&Q. Just pop in your young plants and water in well.

3 Sowing seeds

Some veg can be planted outside in late May, or get a head start with seeds under glass

or covered in a clear plastic bag now. Use a seed or cell tray for small seeds, or pots for large seeds, and a compost like Levington Seed Compost. A mini propagator, £2.98 from B&Q, will help things along. Sow two seeds per cell or pot as an insurance policy; if both seeds take, just weed out the weaker one. Check the instructions on the seed packet for planting depths and how to grow on. Cover and leave on a window sill.

4 Planting outdoors

Harden off (get plants accustomed to outside temperatures) by putting seedlings in a cooler room or outside for a couple of hours each day before

planting outdoors.

When planting, bury the leggy stem up to the first leaf and avoid touching the leaves.



Looking after your crop

Feed and water Water in seeds and regularly water afterwards; soil should always be damp.

Veg will grow more quickly with a feed. Use a high-potash feed like Miracle-Gro or Levington Tomorite, not only for tomatoes but also for any fruiting plant.

Pull out any weeds – they suck up the nutrients that your veg need. A clean, tidy patch that's weed-free will also help to keep the pests away.















Slugs and snails are the enemy! Put down grit, as they hate rough surfaces. Or place slug pubs (small bowls of beer or juice that's gone off) near your plants, as they will choose that instead of the plant.

Pesky pests Marigold flowers planted in among your veg will help ward off pests and will also attract beneficial insects. Eliminate any others you see like aphids, which go for any veg, and whitefly, which attack tomatoes, with a spray of Bug Clear for fruit and veg, which is safe to use on edible produce.



10 easy veg to grow now!

Our top choices take up little space and will produce veg with just a patch, pots or growbags.

VEG	SOW/PLANT	TLC	HARVEST	KITCHEN NOTES
 Beetroot	Sow in pots then plant outside as seeds won't germinate below 7°C. Or sow when warm outside, 1cm deep in rows.	Thin seedlings to 5cm apart when large enough to handle.	10-12 weeks.	Slice up or grate raw for salads. To cook, wrap in foil and bake.
 Beans: runner or French	Sow under glass or direct in a warm sheltered site. Plant 15cm apart at base of cane supports.	Put up cane supports in a wigwam shape. Give a liquid feed every 14 days during midsummer.	8-11 weeks. Harvest while pods are young.	Steam for minimum of time, as vitamins are lost if overcooked. Beans must be cooked before eating.
 Carrots	Sow outdoors 1cm deep, in rows spaced 30cm apart.	When seedlings are large enough to handle, thin to 2cm apart.  Grow spring onion next to carrots to help deter carrot fly.	10-12 weeks.	Use grated in salads. To cook, steam. Try cooked carrots heated in a pan with butter and orange juice.
 Courgettes	Sow 19mm deep in pots. Put in a cold frame or on a window sill until seeds sprout. Sow outdoors once soil has warmed.	Plant out, 60cm apart, when large enough to handle. Give a liquid feed every 14 days when courgettes develop.	7-10 weeks. Pick at 10-16cm. Don't grow large as it will stop new fruits growing.	Delicious raw, diced in a salad. To cook, slice up unpeeled and pop in the oven with some olive oil.
 New potatoes	Plant outdoors in large pots, bags or the ground. Fill pot with 10cm of compost, put 2 seed potatoes in, cover with soil and water in.	When shoots are 15cm high, add another 10cm of soil and repeat until the shoots reach the top. Feed every couple weeks with potash feed.	8-10 weeks. Feel in the soil to check size. Then simply tip them out.	Delicious boiled – just add butter to melt over and chopped chives.
 Sweet peppers & chillies	Sow in trays or small pots under glass. Should sprout in 8-14 days.	Transplant seedlings when large enough to 7.5cm pots. Harden off before planting out. Boost fruit with a high-potash feed.	9-12 weeks. For a long harvest, pick as soon as they start to colour.	Peppers are great for salads, stuffing and frying. Use chillies for flavour and heat in cooking.
 Rocket & spinach	Sow seed outdoors, but easiest grown in pots. Sow 1cm deep in rows.  Very quick & hardy Rocket's not cheap to buy but is so easy to grow.	Keep soil moist at all times to prevent plants running to seed. Seed can be sown in pots on a window sill for all-year harvesting.	30 days after sowing, pick young leaves as needed.	Use in salads. For wild rocket pesto, chop rocket and garlic, then add olive oil and white wine vinegar. An ideal dressing for pasta.
 Mixed salad leaves	Sow outside, 1cm deep. Sow regularly for a continual supply of leaves all summer and autumn.	Thin as necessary to 3cm apart.  Watch out for slugs, they adore soft salad leaves!	Start picking leaves 30 days after sowing.	Great as the main base for all salads.
 Spring onions	Sow outdoors in rows 1cm deep every 3 weeks for continuous crops.	No thinning is required. Keep well watered.	6-8 weeks	Combine with tomatoes, fresh basil and a splash of olive oil for a tasty salad.
 Tomatoes	Sow seeds on window sill or buy plants for outdoors from May. For best results, choose small types like Gardeners' Delight as they ripen fast.	Provide support and tie in. Pinch out side shoots to grow one main stem. Use a high-potash feed. Tap flowers to aid pollination.  Homebase sells Growbag Greenhouses for £12.99.	10-12 weeks for small Gardeners' Delight.	Great in salads or as a sweet, healthy snack. Make a salsa using tomatoes, peppers, spring onions and seasoning – put in a blender and whizz!

SAVE with essentials

Get a DT Brown seed collection (10 packets included) for half price!

You pay just £7.86 (normal RRP is £15.72). The collection includes French Bean Montano, Runner Bean Enorma, Beetroot Solist, Carrot Amsterdam Forcing 3, Courgette Alexander F1, Mixed Salad Leaves, Rocket Skyrocket, Spinach Fiorano F1, Spring Onion White Lisbon AGM and Tomato Gardeners' Delight.

Call the credit card hotline on 0844 770 7733. Or send a cheque, payable to 'DT Brown', to: essentials DT Brown Spring Offer, ES10MAY, Rookery Farm, Joys Bank, Holbeach St Johns, Spalding PE12 8SG. Delivery within 28 days. Offer ends 30 May 2010.



Your low-cost stress-free kids' party guide

The average children's party can cost as much as £200, not to mention the cost to your sanity! Here's how to do it on a budget... and even enjoy it!

Your to-do checklist

- ✓ **SET A BUDGET** and stick to it!
- ✓ **SEND INVITATIONS** You can download free from the Internet, send an e-card or make them yourself.
- ✓ **GET HELP!** Draft in family, friends, your children's friends' parents – and promise to return the favour.
- ✓ **DECORATE** Tie in with a theme: jungle or 'under the sea'; but don't spend a lot – you can buy in bulk or borrow what you need. Cari Parker from partysprite.co.uk says: 'Check out uk.freecycle.org and you could find what you need for free.'
- ✓ **PLAN PARTY FOOD** Basic finger-food is fine for little ones; use your imagination for older kids. Where possible, make things in advance and freeze. Shop around for 2-for-1 buys.
- ✓ **THE CAKE** Make your own, or save time by buying a plain sponge and decorating it yourself.
- ✓ **PARTY BAGS** Don't go wild: a balloon, slice of cake, sweet treat and small gift will do. Check out 'pound shops', discount book stores and amazon.co.uk. Buy ready-filled bags from supermarkets, or go to charliemoos.co.uk and knotjustjigs.co.uk for something different.
- ✓ **THANK YOU CARDS** No kid is too old to write them – they're a must!



If these kids blow out my candles I'll scweam and scweam and scweam!

Toddlers (1-3)

GUESTS Keep numbers low – parents will usually stay with their children at this age and that can double your guest list.

HOW LONG? Keep the length of the party to about 1–1½ hours: their attention span at this age is short, so make things brief to avoid meltdowns.

WHEN? Mid-afternoon should fit in around most toddlers' nap-times.

THEMES Favourites are animals, jungle, teddy bears' picnic; or base your party around a favourite colour or pattern. Hold it outside, if possible, and decorate the location with bunting, paper chains and lots of balloons – toddlers love them!

GAMES At this age, they're too young to understand rules, so keep them occupied with simple and fun activities:

- ◆ Play-Doh and cutters.
- ◆ Crayons and paper.
- ◆ Musical instruments – make shakers with plastic bottles and rice.
- ◆ Favourite nursery rhymes – buy or borrow a CD or download from the Internet.
- ◆ If it's nice enough to be in the garden, get out the beach balls, sand, buckets and spades.

◆ **End the party with bubbles** – little ones are fascinated by them (buy a cheap bubble machine from a supermarket).

FOOD Kids of this age eat very little when they're over-excited, so go for bite-size food: sandwiches shaped with cookie cutters, plus canapés for the adults... oh, and sausage rolls go down well with guests of all ages!

CAKE IDEA Write guests' names on the top with icing pens or try ready-made chocolate letters.

PARTY BAGS (from 2 years up – not for babies; and avoid anything small in case of choking). A £1 toy or book; try thebookpeople.co.uk for great, cheap deals.

tip Younger toddlers don't understand sharing, so open the birthday boy or girl's presents later, to avoid conflict.

Younger kids (3-6)

GUESTS 6-8, or stick to the rule of 'one child for every year of age'.

HOW LONG? 2-2½ hours; they're full of energy at this age, but do get tired easily.

WHEN? Incorporate lunch or tea, or choose a time between meals and give them nibbles and cake.

THEMES Kids love dressing up.

◆ **Boys** For pirates, make an old white sheet into a sail, hand out eye patches and strips of fabric for headscarves. Or go for a super-hero or monster theme.

◆ **Girls** For princesses and fairies, drape netting from the ceiling, string up fairy lights and bunting, hang balloons and give them tiaras or wands as they arrive.

◆ **Unisex** Dress them as cowboys and Indians, witches and wizards; or have an outer space or dinosaur theme.

GAMES Keep them short to avoid boredom: hide and seek, pass the parcel, pin the tail on the donkey, musical chairs. You could even get them decorating a party hat with pens, gems and glitter.

FOOD Offer a balance of treats and healthy things (but don't be too virtuous). Try vegetable crisps, fill mini pittas with small meatballs, make jam and cream cheese wraps, vegetable kebabs and coat pieces of fruit in chocolate.

Cake idea Add themed edible cake toppers, or use a toy animal and character figures.

PARTY BAGS A comic, a gingerbread man and a water pistol or jewellery set.

tip Give stickers to children to play with as they get knocked out of a game... it stops them getting grumpy!

tip If you're hosting an activity party or trip out, get the other parents' permission – and use it as an excuse to draft in their help!



Older kids (6-9)

GUESTS 8-12 – well, you can't invite the whole class!

HOW LONG? 2-3 hours.

WHEN? After school or a weekend afternoon.

THEMES Think about an activity party.

◆ **Sports** Swimming and trampolining are popular. Check out your local sports centre.

◆ **Face painting** Clowns and animals go down well. Buy a Face Painting Party Pack for £13.99 at tescoparty.com (paints up to 60 faces).

◆ **Baking** Buy a Cupcake Kit, £11.95, from firebox.com, or a box of Green's Cookies with Love, £1.99, from supermarkets, and they can take what they make home with them.

◆ **Pottery** 'Let them paint cheap white mugs,' say party organisers at Lesenfans.co.uk.

◆ Or try a simple **fashion show** or **disco dancing competition**!

◆ **Bouncy castles** If you host a joint party with one of your child's classmates, you can share the cost. Make sure there's an adult free to supervise the castle at all times.

GAMES Kids love treasure hunts and charades or buy a piñata from £11.95 at tescoparty.com.

FOOD Serve a small hot meal: bangers and mash, spag Bol, or DIY funny-face pizzas followed by ice cream sundaes.

CAKE IDEA Turn a square sponge into a castle with coloured icing, sprinkles and cones for the turrets; or make a train using a large chocolate roll for the engine, smaller ones for wheels and the funnel, and sweets to decorate.

PARTY BAG Have a lucky dip instead – just make sure everyone gets a prize!

Tweenies (10 – early teens)

ALL CHANGE Now they're too cool for 'children's' parties, avoid conflict by offering options and letting them choose what they want to do.

GUESTS A select few; your children will tell you who they want to invite!

HOW LONG AND WHEN? On average 3-4 hours – or even overnight if it's happening at the weekend!

YOU CAN STILL HOST A HOME PARTY

◆ **Movie night** with DVDs and popcorn.

◆ **Games party** use Wii Sports or similar.

◆ **Beach party** with a BBQ and fruit punch.

◆ **Karaoke** Hire or borrow a machine, or use a musical computer game like *Singstar*.

◆ **Makeover and pamper party** for the girls – persuade other mums to help with their hair and make-up!

SURVIVING A SLEEPOVER

◆ Invite 4-6 single-sexed guests.

◆ Ask them to bring their own bedding (saves on the washing!)

◆ They'll be happy chatting and watching a movie; or try a trivia quiz or game of (sensible) 'truth or dare'.

◆ Serve up a pizza – treat them to a takeaway or let them make their own.

◆ Let them have a midnight snack, but avoid anything too sugary or with additives or they'll be up all night.

◆ Decide rules and time for lights-out early on to avoid any arguments. Make sure they know they can phone home or go home if they want to.

CAKE IDEA An indulgent chocolate cake covered in Maltesers and chocolate sprinkles or shavings.

tip Taking them out for a treat? Go to myvouchercode.co.uk or moneyexpert.com for all the latest deals.



Create a display

Use a shallow box with a lid and some pretty paper and Perspex from your local DIY store to fit the top.



1 Remove the box lid. To make a frame for the Perspex insert, draw a rectangle in the centre of the lid. Carefully cut out with a craft knife.



2 To cover the lid, cut a map or piece of pretty paper to the size of its width, length and depth, plus an extra 13mm on all sides. Coat the top and sides of the lid with adhesive. Put the paper wrong side up and centre the lid upside down on top. Using your craft knife, cut out a rectangular window. At each corner of the paper, mark and cut out a square (see photo above).



3 Fold the long sides of paper over the edges of the box and smooth down, pressing around the corners. Repeat with short sides. Use strong glue to secure the Perspex pane in the lid; weight down with a book and leave to dry. Cut coloured paper to fit the base of the box and glue in place. Fix your items in the box with glue, then replace the lid.

Turn memories into a work of art

Get creative!

Drawers crammed with photos and keepsakes? Then turn them into beautiful memories with these great ideas



Taken from Martha Stewart's Encyclopedia of Crafts (£19.99, David & Charles)



More inspirational ideas...

Make a favourite holiday box

This lovely idea shows off three-dimensional keepsakes by putting them in a deep box frame (Ikea has a good selection).

1 Remove backing from a box frame. Glue your backing paper into place.

2 Arrange your holiday memorabilia – maps, toy cars, tickets, souvenirs – and use a strong glue to fix all your items in place. Leave to dry.

3 If you like, you can write details of where and when your keepsakes were collected, or you could attach labels. Once the glue is dry, put your frame back together again and set out on display.



MAKE A WALL-MOUNTED FAMILY TREE

Take old black and white photos, or good photocopies of them, and stencil your own 'frame' around the edges of each. If you've managed to trace your family tree, you can also link the photos together with a decorative swirl to show who came from who!

TURN A TABLE INTO A TALKING POINT

Make your glass coffee table or dressing table into something that tells the story of your life. Under the glass, display old family letters or poems, photos, tickets, birth certificates – anything that tells your story.



PILE 'EM HIGH KEEPSAKES

Here's how to turn your memories into a different work of art – a sculpture! Pile boxes, old tickets, invitations, photos – even the odd souvenir – into a mountain of memories. Use glue where necessary, and display on a shelf.



Travel websites to save you money

Planning a holiday? Then we've found the sites that make it a whole lot easier, quicker and more cost-effective

For city breaks greatgetaways.co.uk



If you want a short break, this is the place to go, with deals to big cities including

Paris and New York. Browse through the packages or do an advanced search if you have more specific requirements.
Best bit... Three nights for the price of one going by Eurostar in spring – we found 2-star room-only 6km from Lille city centre for £85 and 4-star B&B in the centre for £179.

Family holidays takethefamily.com



This site is a great source of inspiration for family holidays,

giving information about destinations and what there is to do. You can book suggested trips through the site, too.
Best bit... The Family Forum where you post questions about the holiday you're after. The Special Offers section has discounts of 5-10% on all sorts of breaks.

Expert advice travelzoo.co.uk



This site has experts in 19 cities around the world finding and

test-booking recommended deals. They get the info to you as quickly as possible, and provide links to the relevant companies so you can book direct.
Best bit... Each week the site rounds up 20 top travel deals from thousands of other sites and sends them to your inbox. Just sign up to join in.

Find out if the sun will shine weather2travel.com



Check what the weather will be like in the place you're planning to visit; just pop in the town or resort and it will give current climate info as well as the usual weather for the time of year.

Best bit... The Holiday Planner lets you type in the month you want to travel and the weather you'd like and suggests destinations that suit.

Blogs to advise you sunmaster.co.uk



Promising the personal touch, this site offers cheap holidays and late deals. Sign up for deal alerts or use the search facility to find what you're looking for.

Best bit... Travel blogs from people who've been there – or are still there – provide lots of useful information to help you decide.

3 ways to cheaper train travel

Be prepared to spend time finding the best fares... these tips will help:

- ✓ **Buy in advance** There are great-value single fares, but they're limited and go quickly, so check as early as you can on nationalrail.co.uk.
 - ✓ **Get a railcard** You can get 33% off most fares and 60% for children travelling with you, though there are time restrictions. A Family Railcard costs £26 for a year – well worth it as you can get more than that back on one journey. Go to railcard.co.uk.
 - ✓ **Split your tickets** On longer journeys it can be cheaper to buy a ticket to a major stop on the way, then one from there to your final destination – there's no need to change trains. Check on nationalrail.co.uk to see if split ticketing will pay.
- TOO MUCH RESEARCH?** If you don't have the time, try bestvaluefares.co.uk. It rounds up all the deals so you can find the best price.

For solo travellers justyou.co.uk



Travelling alone? This site offers you escorted holidays, including

cruises, culture, safaris and skiing – with no single supplements.

Best bit... Try a UK Discovery Weekend from £199 for two nights' half board in a 4-star hotel, including an excursion and dancing both nights, to see if it's for you.

Try a home swap ukholidayswapshop.co.uk



If you're looking for a home-from-home break, try this site.

There's a fee of £14.95 per year that gives you access to all the other UK home-swappers.

Best bit... Post photos of your home and browse those of others. The guide to Happy Swapping has useful advice on this economical holiday option.

Best car deals carhiresearch.co.uk



Type in holiday details for info from all the relevant car hire

companies. We were offered a Peugeot 107 for £250.11 from Hertz for two weeks in July from Faro airport in Portugal – it was £561.57 from Alamo.

Best bit... Customer reviews and ratings of the car hire companies are really useful.

Stress-free UK trip transportdirect.info



Comprehensive route and journey planner for travel in Britain on all modes of

transport, with door-to-door instructions and up-to-the-minute itineraries – well worth checking out before you set off.

Best bit... Live travel news is displayed on the home page so you can easily see if there's anything that may affect your journey.

Best deals around travel.co.uk



Search for, and compare deals on package holidays

(flights, hotels and cruises coming soon), with some big companies, then book through the site. Quick and easy to use.

Best bit... The 'get me out of here' last-minute package holidays – we found a week self-catering in Lanzarote for £127 per person.

Somewhere special oneoffplaces.co.uk



B&B and self-catering places that are a little bit special. How about

a gamekeeper's cottage in Scotland, from £285 for a week for five, or a village house in Croatia sleeping ten, with its own pool, from £800.

Best bit... You book direct with the owners, which means no agent's fee so it's cheaper than you might pay elsewhere.

Fancy camping? ukcampsite.co.uk



Everything to do with camping is on this site including listings of

thousands of campsites with customer reviews. There are plenty of tent reviews, too.

Best bit... Type the town or county you're visiting into the search option and you'll get back the nearest campsites, with facilities and prices.

Online travel tips iknowagreatplace.com



This social networking site for travellers shares tips, trips and

photos. Get advice from people who live where you plan to visit.

Best bit... Access to really knowledgeable travel experts. Off to Turkey? Send questions to Deborah. Want to try a safari? Ask Robert. Perfect for good, honest info.

tip DON'T FORGET INSURANCE

◆ Even a small problem can cause holiday havoc. If you go away more than once a year, an annual policy is best.

◆ Take each person's European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) to get free or low-cost emergency treatment in EU countries. Apply at ehic.org.uk (not ehic.org – it charges £9.95).



Relax and enjoy – you won't be paying for it for the rest of the year!

Get your flight right

If booking online, here's what you need to know...

✓ **When and where?** Use a screenscraping site, which compares lots of prices in one place. Skyscanner.net and travelsupermarket.com are worth a try. Skyscanner has the option of putting in dates with no destination and it comes back with all the best deals on flights.

✓ **Want a hotel too?** Flight brokers do deals with airlines and hotels. Try expedia.co.uk and travelocity.co.uk.

✓ **Happy to go any time** – and even anywhere? There's a clever tool on moneysavingexpert.com called FlightChecker. Pop in as much or as little info as you like for options from all the budget airlines.

✓ **Sort your seat** Go to seatguru.com and choose the airline you're travelling with to get a seat map of the planes they fly. If you can't book specific seats it at least gives you a clue which ones to rush for when you board!

✓ **Need to know** Sign up for email updates from the budget airlines so you'll be first in line for their sales.

✓ **Problems?** Go to the Air Transport Users Council (auc.org.uk) for advice.

where to shop

All prices and contact details are correct at the time of going to press

17 @ Boots 0845 070 8090

Accessorize 020 3372 3000
accessorize.co.uk
Alpha-H beautyexpert.co.uk
Andrew Collinge Nationwide
Aspace aspace.co.uk
A-shu a-shu.co.uk
Austins austincurtains.co.uk
Avène avene.co.uk and Boots

B&Q 0845 609 6688
diy.com

bareMinerals Nationwide or
bareescentuals.co.uk

Benefit 0800 496 1084
benefitcosmetics.co.uk

Berry Red 01432 274 805
berryred.co.uk

Bhs 0845 196 0000 bhs.co.uk

Bobbi Brown 0870 034 2566

Bombay Duck 020 8749

3000 bombayduck.co.uk

Bon Marche 01924 700 100

bonmarche.co.uk

Boots 0845 070 8090

Broseley Fires 01743 461

444 broseleyfires.com

Calvin Klein Department
stores nationwide

Cath Kidston 0845 026

2440 cathkidston.co.uk

Caudalie at Boots

Chanel 020 7493 3836

Charles Worthington

0800 581 001

Clinique 0870 034 2566

Cox & Cox 0844 858 0744

coxandcox.co.uk

Davines 020 3301 5449

Debenhams 0844 561 6161

debenhams.com

Dermologica 0800 591 818

Dorothy Perkins 0845 121

4515 dorothyperkins.com

Dotcomgiftshop 020 8746

2473 dotcomgiftshop.com

Dulux dulux.co.uk

Dunelm Mill 0845 165 6565

dunelm-mill.co.uk

Estée Lauder 0870 034

2566 esteelauder.co.uk

Eucerin Nationwide

Evans 0845 121 4516

evans.co.uk

Fashion Union

fashionunion.co.uk

Freedom at Topshop 01277

844 476 topshop.co.uk

Garnier Nationwide

George at Asda 0500

100 055 george.com

Green & Spring

greenandspring.com

HayMax haymax.biz and

pharmacies and supermarkets

House of Bath 0871 230

0867 houseofbath.co.uk

House of Fraser 0844 800

3731 houseoffraser.co.uk

Ikea 0845 358 3363

ikea.co.uk

Ivory Pearl Interiors

020 7701 2330

ivorypearlinteriors.com

Jane Norman 020 7659

1234 janenorman.co.uk

John Lewis 0845 604 9049

johnlewis.com

Joico hqhair.com

Joules 0845 606 6871

joulesclothing.com

Laithwaites laithwaites.co.uk

La Redoute 0844 842 2222

laredoute.co.uk

Laura Ashley 0871 983

5999 lauraashley.com

Lavender & Sage 0845 601

0522 lavenderandsage.co.uk

Lily & Lime lilyandlime.co.uk

Linzi Shoes linzishoes.com

L'Occitane 020 7907 0301

L'Oréal Paris Nationwide

M&Co 0800 031 7200

mandco.com

Marks & Spencer 0845 302

1234 marksandspencer.com

Matalan 0845 330 3330

matalan.co.uk

Max Factor Nationwide

Maybelline Nationwide

Moroccanoil hqhair.com

Nelsons Nationwide

Neutrogena Nationwide

New Look 0500 454 094

newlook.co.uk

Next 0844 844 8939

next.co.uk

Nia24 020 8740 2085

or at Space NK

Nivea Nationwide

Oceanic Jewellers

oceanicjewellers.com

Olay Nationwide

Oliver Bonas 020 8974 0110

oliverbonas.com

Organic Surge at Boots and

organicsurge.com

Origins 0800 731 4039

origins.co.uk

Paul Mitchell

01296 390 590

Paper Nation 0800 321

3167 papernation.co.uk

Pavers pavers.co.uk

Peacocks 0292 027 0222

peacocks.co.uk

Pearl Drops Nationwide

The Perfume Shop 0845 601

1950 theperfumeshop.com

Philosophy 0870 990 8452

Prestige at Boots

Primark 0118 960 6300

primark.co.uk

Plasti-kote plasti-kote.co.uk

Purl Frost 0800 599 9421

purlfrost.com

QS qsgroup.co.uk

QVC 0800 504 030

qvcuk.com

Ravel 01706 212 512

Revlon 0800 085 2716

Rituals uk.ritualsstore.com

Schwarzkopf Professional

01296 314 000

Simple Nationwide

Simply Be simplybe.co.uk

Skin Doctors 0845 612 2070

skindoctors.co.uk

Smashbox at Debenhams

Spaseekers 0845 555 8555

spaseekers.com

Spin Collective 01242 255

244 spincollective.co.uk

Spotty Button 01327 261

560 spottybutton.co.uk

Steam Cream

steamcream.co.uk

Supatra 01753 858 885

supatra.co.uk

Tesco Direct 0845 600 4411

clothingattesco.com

Tu at Sainsbury's 0800 636 262

2.sainsburys.co.uk/tuclclothing

Urban Decay at Debenhams,

Boots and House of Fraser

Very very.co.uk

Vichy at Boots and pharmacies

Vie at Home 0845 300 8022

vieathome.com

Wallis 0845 121 4520

wallis.co.uk

Wallpaper Direct 01323 430

886 wallpaperdirect.co.uk

Wedgwood wedgwood.com

and House of Fraser and

John Lewis

Wella 0800 328 3400

Wilkinson Plus 0845 608

0807 wilkinsonplus.com

Back issues £3 per copy. John Denton Services, essentials Back Issues Department, PO Box 772, Peterborough PE2 6WJ (01733 385 170 24-hours (secure website: mags-uk.com/ipc). Cheque/PO payable to IPC Media Ltd. Subscriptions Credit card hotline 01622 778 778 (UK orders only). Cheques payable to IPC Media Ltd. Subscription rates (12 issues, inc p&p): UK £32.50; USA direct entry \$64.43; Europe/Eire 72.34 euros; North America \$83.65; rest of the world £73.48. (Overseas copies sent Priority Service: 3-5 days within Europe/Eire; and within 5-7 days for all other countries; USA direct entry: 5-12 days.) Subscriptions enquiries and order hotline: 0845 676 7778. essentials **Subscriptions**, PO Box 272, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 3ZA; email ipcmedia.subs@qss-uk.com. Enquiries and overseas orders: IPC Media Ltd, Rockwood House, Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 3DH; tel +44 (0) 845 676 7778. Periodicals paid at Rahway, NJ. US agent: Mercury International, 365 Blair Road, Avenel, NJ 07001. Postmaster: please send address corrections to: essentials, c/o M.A.I.L. America, 365 Blair Road, Avenel, New Jersey NJ 07001. **Printing** Origination by Wyndham Pre-press. Printed in the UK by Wyndham Impact and the Polestar Group Ltd.

Distribution Marketforce (UK) Ltd, The Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU (020 314 83333). © **A Time Warner company, IPC Media Ltd, 2010** essentials magazine is published by IPC SouthBank Publishing Company Ltd, part of the IPC Media Ltd group of companies. Reproduction of any written material or illustration in this publication in any form or for any purpose, other than short extracts for the purpose of review, is expressly forbidden unless the prior consent of the Publisher has been given in writing. essentials is sold subject to the following conditions, namely that it shall not, without the written consent of the Publishers first given, be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of by way of Trade at more than the recommended selling price shown on the cover, and that it shall not be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of in a mutilated condition or in any unauthorised cover by way of Trade, or affixed to or as part of any publication or advertising, literary or pictorial matter whatsoever. ISSN: 0953 6337.



WIN with essentials

Enter today to be
in with a chance

ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS...



BY PHONE... Call **0901 553 0056** and you can enter all the treats listed on the coupon! BT calls cost 50p per minute and last approximately two minutes – costs from other networks may vary.



BY TEXT... Text ESSTREAT1 Followed by a space, your selection(s), your size (if applicable), your name, house number and postcode to **86611** – eg ESSTREAT1 01 03 06 Chloe 14 NN01 3LL. Texts cost £1 each, plus network charges. SP: Eckoh, 0870 880 4869. When you enter by text, you may in future get sms marketing messages from IPC and essentials; if you don't want to, please end your text with No info.



BY POST... On the coupon, tick the treats you would like to win, fill in your details and send to: Win with essentials May 2010, PO Box 502, Leicester LE94 0AB.

Phone lines open at midnight on 1 April and close at midnight on 29 April 2010.

Terms & conditions Normal IPC rules apply. Competition details form part of these terms and conditions. Entry is open to residents of the UK except employees (and their families) of IPC Media, its printers and agents, and competition sponsors. The winners (and companions, where relevant) must be aged 18 or over, unless otherwise stated. Proof of identity and age may be required. Use of a false name or address will result in disqualification. No responsibility can be accepted for entries lost or delayed in the post. Prizes are as stated and not transferable; no cash alternatives will be offered. Prizes are subject to availability. The promoters reserve the right to amend or alter the terms of a competition. No purchase is necessary. Winners will be chosen at random from all entries received by the closing date. The decision of the judges is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Competitions may be modified or withdrawn at any time.

WIN with essentials

MAY 2010

ESSTREAT1 01 ☐

ESSTREAT1 02 ☐

ESSTREAT1 03 ☐

ESSTREAT1 04 ☐

ESSTREAT1 05 ☐

ESSTREAT1 06 ☐

ESSTREAT1 07 ☐

Title Initials Surname

Address

.....

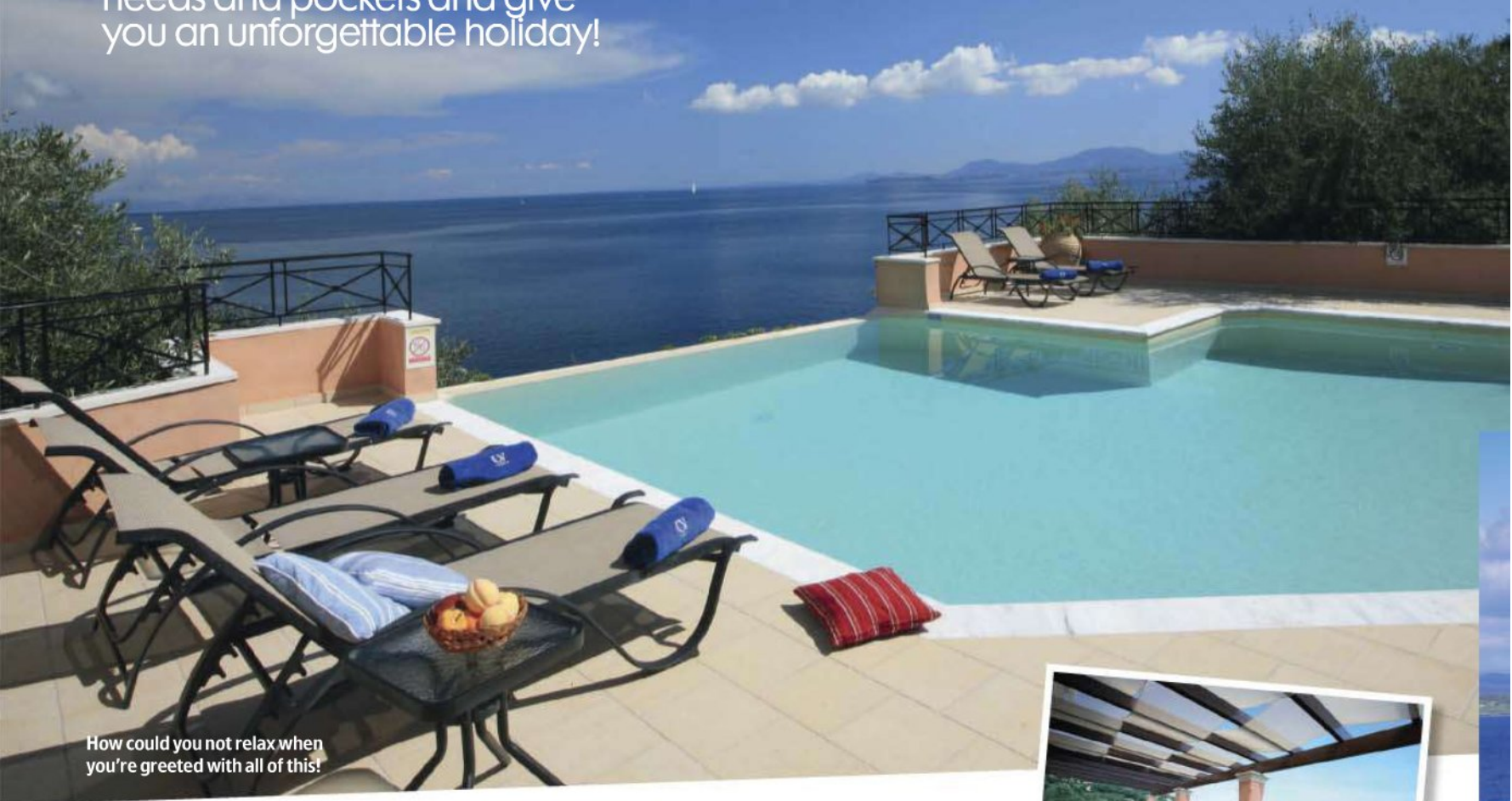
..... Postcode Size

Daytime tel no *Email

essentials published by IPC Media Ltd (IPC), will collect your personal information. *Would you like to receive emails from essentials containing news, special offers and product and service information and take part in our magazine research via email? If yes, please tick here ☐ essentials would like to contact you by post or telephone to promote and ask your opinion on our magazines and services. Please tick here if you prefer not to hear from us. ☐ IPC may occasionally pass your details to carefully selected organisations so they can contact you by telephone, post or email with regard to promoting and researching their products and services. Please tick here if you prefer not to be contacted ☐

Holiday homes to fall in love with...

Self-catering has come a long way from cramped caravans and windswept tents. Now with everything from luxe apartments in the Med to remote romantic castles, there are loads of options to suit all needs and pockets and give you an unforgettable holiday!



How could you not relax when you're greeted with all of this!

Modern Corfu villa to chill out in

Corfu's sought-after north-east coast is the fabulous setting for the Villa Kyma, tucked away to be pretty well invisible to everyone else (unless they're on a boat) yet with the most wonderful views over the Med. Modern, spacious and spectacular in design, Villa Kyma comfortably sleeps eight and makes the most of its hillside setting with a wonderful outdoor dining balcony, taking full advantage of the views, and a large living room – all on the upper floor. The beach is just a few minutes' walk away where you'll find a long expanse of white pebbles and a friendly taverna.

There's no need to feel isolated, though, as you can enjoy the variety of water sports, nightlife, restaurants and beaches close by, and Kassiope's clubs and bars are a short drive up the coast. However, you may well find you spend most of your time relaxing around the villa's private pool.

Go for it The cost of seven nights, per person, is £460 in May and £990 in August with CV Travel (020 7401 1026; cvtravel.co.uk), based on eight sharing, including Gatwick flights, taxi transfers and welcome food hamper.



Villa Kyma is perfect if you want to relax totally: gorgeous setting, fabulous views, private pool, a choice of terraces – what's not to like!

Holiday in style in a French chateau

Chateau des Etoiles is a beautiful, historic, fairytale property complete with its own tower and set within three acres of land. You get 5-star quality at a 2-star price, and it's ideal for a large family. It would also easily accommodate up to three families who want to club together, as it has three double and three twin rooms. Better still, the live-in chef and housekeeper do all the chores for you and can make gourmet meals available, so you can really relax.

There's a daily delivery of croissants, pastries and fresh bread, and a Champagne reception for you on your arrival. Then you're free to enjoy the heated, enclosed, saltwater pool and explore the local area. And if you'd rather stay indoors, the kids will love choosing costumes from the extensive dressing-up box provided. Free English-speaking babysitting is included in the price, as is a shuttle service into nearby Ribérac.

Go for it The house costs from £2,980 to £3,980, which amounts to £1,326 per family in high season for three families, with Tots to Travel (totstotravel.co.uk). Travel costs are extra, but the house is just 40 minutes from Bergerac (budget around £420 for return flights for four with flybe.com in June).



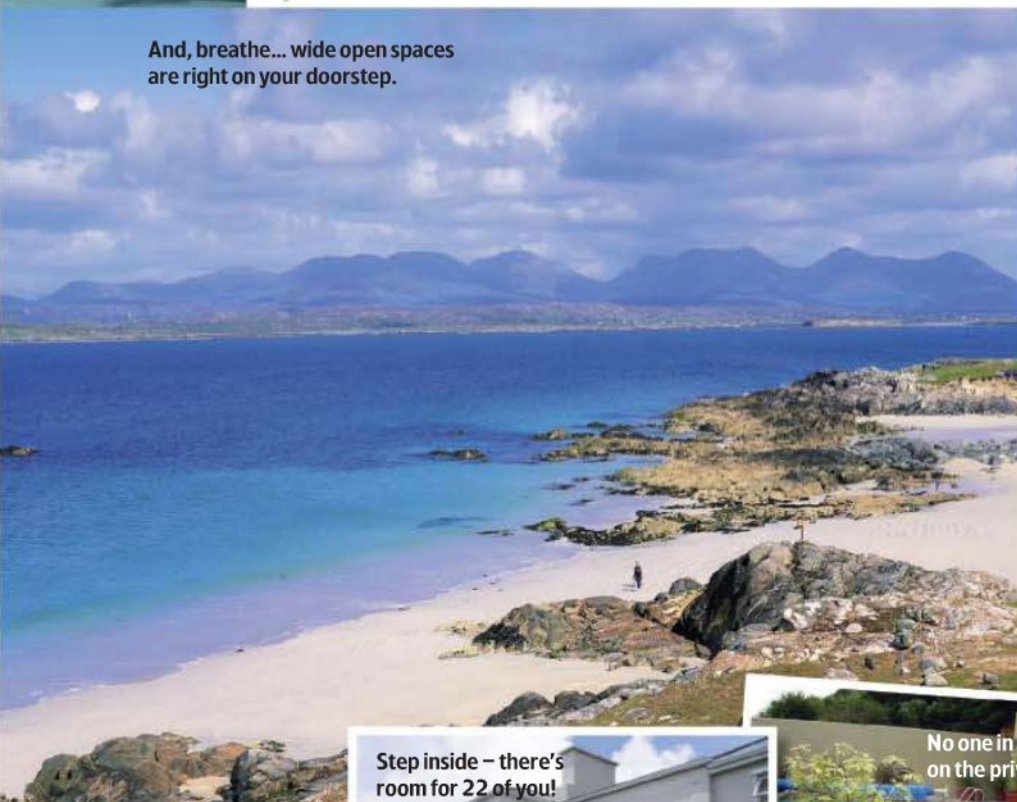
Magnifique! At this gorgeous French chateau they seem to have thought of everything.



Save £100 on Chateau des Etoiles and get a free Cuddledry UV poncho towel for toddlers if you book by 1 May. Get a £25 discount off any other property and a Cuddledry UV poncho towel. Just quote *essentials* when booking.

**SAVE
WITH
essentials**

And, breathe... wide open spaces are right on your doorstep.



Enjoy the high life in your own mansion in Ireland

The stunning Connemara coast of Ireland provides the perfect backdrop for a great holiday, especially if you fancy pooling your resources with a couple of other families and renting a big, elegant, coastal property.

Sunnybank House (property no 5441) is an imposing Victorian mansion, sleeping up to 22 people (and two pets). Enjoy your private heated swimming pool, tennis court and mature gardens. Inside, you'll find 11 en suite bedrooms, ornate fireplaces and traditional furnishings.

It's an easy walk to the beach, and there are craft shops, restaurants and pubs nearby, many with live music.

Go for it Weekly cost is £2,435 in winter up to £4,783 in August (£110-£218 per person) with Imagine Ireland (01756 703 191; imagineireland.com). Ferry crossings can be arranged, costing from £150 per car and four adults in March, and £280 in August (Holyhead-Dublin).

Step inside - there's room for 22 of you!



No one in the pool? Must be on the private tennis court!



**FREE
WITH
essentials**

Imagine Ireland will offer a deluxe hamper of Irish food and drink to anyone booking a week's stay this year through *essentials*. Just quote *essentials* when booking.

Make it easy on yourself

We've thought of absolutely everything, so you don't have to. Here's our useful list:

Taking your pet with you?

- ✓ Myholidaygetaway.com offers simple searches (including 'pets welcome') of properties in the UK and abroad.
- ✓ pawsforawalk.co.uk details all sorts of dog-friendly short breaks and holidays, with links to the Pet Travel Scheme.
- ✓ hhfrance.com lists self-catering properties throughout France and there's a special pet-friendly section.

Baby on board

- ✓ totstotravel.co.uk specialises in finding the best self-catering properties and ensuring that they're suitable for families, particularly those with babies and toddlers.
- ✓ mumsnet.com has an excellent travel section, with great advice on choosing self-catering properties, as well as tips on dealing with everything from insect stings to jetlag.

Read the small print

- ✓ Most self-catering rentals (whether direct with the owner or through an agency) require you to pay a refundable breakage deposit, usually between £100 and £200. So check before you book that the property is not full of pricey ornaments if, for example, you're bringing youngsters!
- ✓ Check the cleaning arrangements. An end-of-week clean may be an optional extra, but it's probably worth paying for, especially if you have to be out by 10am (or earlier) and need to make a flight or ferry.

Useful contacts

The following websites may be helpful with your planning and booking:

travel-lists.co.uk is an independent holiday directory, with background information supplied by experts.

cheznous.com puts you in direct contact with owners of more than 7,000 French properties, and can make your travel bookings, too.

interhome.co.uk has been in the business for more than 40 years and offers a huge selection of holiday homes, villas, chalets and apartments. Its advanced search option allows you to specify activities and amenities.

Designer Mallorcan chic

Fuentes d'Alt in Mallorca is a beautiful modern villa, just 100 metres from the beach and has fabulous views across the Med and the surrounding Mallorcan countryside. Perched above the village of Sant Vicenç, it's perfect if you're looking for peace and quiet. The villa sleeps eight and has bright, modern furnishings and designer fittings. The main ground-floor rooms open on to a large terrace, which spans the length of the house.

Two minutes' walk away is the sandy beach at Cala Molins, while a little further on is Cala Marques, well known for having one of the best fish restaurants in the area. Pollença, with its excellent restaurants and pretty harbour, is just a 10-minute drive away.

Go for it A summer week costs £700 per person with Coastline (0844 557 1020; coastline.co.uk), with flights from Gatwick including taxes, accommodation, car hire, welcome food pack, daily croissants, bread and newspapers, 24-hour concierge, and a twice-weekly maid service.

Fuentes d'Alt – your luxury haven a stone's throw from the beach.

Your pool perhaps? It could be time to take the plunge and book yourself in!

As far as the kids are concerned Florida = paradise.

A taste of luxury in Florida

If you're heading for the theme parks of Florida, then a Bronze Villa, located in a gated complex no more than 15–30 minutes drive from the main Orlando attractions, offers the perfect environment for relaxation and recovery after a fun-filled park day. Each house features three bedrooms, a living area and fully equipped kitchen, as well as a private heated swimming pool.

It's a great way to make the most of all that the area has to offer while enjoying your own private space, and you'll save money by not eating out all the time.

Go for it A seven-night holiday costs £2,116 for a family of four, including Virgin Atlantic flights and free Alamo car hire, departing in May with Jetsave (0871 664 0294; jetsave.com). The same package departing 4 August costs £3,956.

Out & about

News, views and tips to help you get the most from your time off

Tapas for your holiday table...

How about this for a great idea? Order your first night's dinner on holiday from tapasinabox.com and enjoy a fab selection of hand-made Spanish tapas. Boxes can be delivered to any UK address and come in three sizes, for four to six (£48), six to eight (£72) and eight to ten (£105).



■ Tapas in a Box would like to offer one of their flamenco aprons to the first 50 readers who place an order for a box of tapas with them, quoting *essentials* when they do so.

FREE WITH essentials

More sun for your pound

Sterling's recent gains against most holiday currencies means we should get more foreign cash for our English pounds.

◆ Research by Post Office Travel Money reveals we'll receive about 8% more Egyptian pounds, 10% more US dollars, 8% more Dubai dirhams and 12% more Jamaican dollars than a year ago.

◆ The Post Office reckons Egypt is the star choice, pricewise, in 2010.

Fancy a mini break at a mini price?

The stunning Rhinefield House is a luxurious country house hotel in 40 acres of gardens in the New Forest and is a member of Hand Picked Hotels. Readers can stay for one night for the exclusive price of £97.50* including dinner in the award-winning Armada Restaurant and full English breakfast. Visit handpickedhotels.co.uk/rhinefieldessentials or call 01590 622 922, quoting *essentials*.



CAMPING GOES GLAMPING

How about a glamorous holiday in the great outdoors? According to pitchup.com you can enjoy a camping spa experience at Waterside Holiday Park (watersideholidays.co.uk), or hot tubs at Pine Lodge Holidays (pinelodgeholidays.co.uk).

Camping fashion is taking the limelight, too, with camping collections becoming the new cruise collections. If you don't believe us, then check out Zandra Rhodes' new range of teepees, anoraks and wellies for Millets!



Mallorca has plenty of unspoilt areas waiting for you to explore.

Tranquil Turkish luxury

Check in to a luxury bolthole on the car-free island of Heybeliada near Istanbul. Style, sophistication and a touch of the exotic await at The Karamanyan, a former Ottoman mansion that's been turned into four luxury apartments. Hire bicycles, take a horse-drawn carriage tour, or go for walks in the woods. You can explore the sights of Istanbul (European Capital of Culture 2010), a 45-minute ferry ride away. Island-hopping is a popular pursuit, with inexpensive ferries calling at the four largest (do bear in mind ferries get very busy, so don't rely on the last boat of the day to get you home!).

Go for it A one-week stay, accommodation only, costs from £545 with Istanbul Islands (istanbulislands.com) for the lower ground floor apartment, sleeping up to four. In high season it's £760. Easyjet fly from Luton and Gatwick to Istanbul. May prices from £70 return. A taxi to Bostanci sea port costs £15-£17 and the ferry crossing is £4.

Stay at The Karamanyan – an Ottoman mansion.

FREE WITH essentials

Istanbul Islands are offering *essentials* readers a complimentary welcome pack, full of local treats. Just quote *essentials* when booking.

Explore the fascinating city of Istanbul, a short ferry ride away.



SAVE £20 when you shop at very.co.uk

Whether it's summer clothes just for you or for the whole family, you can make a brilliant saving this month



There's never a bad time for shopping and this month a bit of a spree will be even more enjoyable if you visit online department store **Very.co.uk**, as you'll get £20 off your first order as a new customer. All you have to do is spend £40 to make this brilliant saving... and that won't be hard when you see how much there is to choose from.

- ◆ Take a look at the latest summer styles from celebs like Fearné Cotton and Holly Willoughby – sizes go up to 32 in many of the collections.
- ◆ Check out the luxurious lingerie from big-brand names like Freya and Triumph.
- ◆ Find out how difficult it is to resist the thousands of accessories, from designer shoes and bags to statement jewellery. There's plenty

for the kids and for your home, too.

- ◆ At **Very.co.uk** you can read reviews, chat to other customers in the forum and get lots of style tips.
 - ◆ Pay the easy way – open a Very account and go for the Take 3 option, where you can split your bill over three months and don't pay a penny extra.
- Time to shop then! Just go to **Very.co.uk** and claim £20 off your first order.**

HOW TO CLAIM YOUR DISCOUNT ONLINE

Go to **Very.co.uk** and enter **ZZ469** in the promotional code box at the checkout when you complete your online order. This offer is valid until 31 May 2010.

TERMS & CONDITIONS This offer can only be used once to obtain £20 discount when you place your first order of £40 or more and is valid until 31 May 2010. Returned goods, financial services products and delivery charges will not count towards the value of the order and this offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other discount or promotional offer. Promotional codes are codes that enable customers to obtain benefits such as discounts, free delivery and free gifts. These codes are non-transferable so may only be used by the person to whom they are issued and must be used in accordance with their terms and conditions of use. If you use a promotional code to claim a promotional benefit, you must first check that it was issued to you and that you are eligible to use it. By using it to claim a promotional benefit you will be confirming that: (i) you are entitled to use the code; (ii) you meet all the conditions that apply to its use; (iii) you agree to the terms set out below. If, before accepting your order, we find you are not entitled to use the code or do not meet all the terms and conditions of its use, we may reject your order or process it without the promotional benefit being applied. If, after accepting your order, we find you were not entitled to use the code or did not meet all the terms and conditions of its use, we may reverse the benefit you obtained. If you transacted on a cash basis, eg by debit or credit card, we may take a further payment, equivalent to the value of the benefit obtained, from the card used. If you transacted on a credit basis, the value of the benefit obtained may be charged to your credit account. Credit provided, subject to status, by Shop Direct Finance Company Ltd. Registered no 4660974. Registered office: Aintree Innovation Centre, Park Lane, Netherton, Bootle L30 1SL. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority in respect of arranging insurance products. Goods/services provided by Shop Direct Home Shopping Ltd. Registered no 4663281. Registered office: First Floor, Skyways House, Speke Road, Speke, Liverpool L70 1AB.

Your beauty treat **FREE** VIE at home eyeshadow worth £8.50!

Update your make-up bag for spring with a fab new cream eyeshadow – just choose your fave colour and pay £2.50 for delivery... easy

It's got the staying power of a powder shadow, but glides on as smoothly as a cream. With the brilliant VIE at home Time Proof Cream Eyeshadow and Equinox Eye Colour it's so easy to achieve different looks – just click the pen and add a light slick of colour for daytime or apply several layers to create dramatic nighttime eyes.

These are make-up-bag must-haves – and one of them is yours, free. Your biggest decision will be which colour to choose!

- ◆ **Equinox in Meteor** – blue eyes will look even bluer – one slick for day, then top it up for sexy night eyes.
 - ◆ **Time Proof in Taupe** – natural, but so dramatic.
 - ◆ **Equinox in Stellar** – a pretty pink that's just perfect for spring/summer.
 - ◆ **Time Proof in Gold Rush** – a delicate gold with a slight shimmer gives a touch of glam in an instant.
- All you do is pay £2.50 for the p&p and you'll have your gift within 14 days... a lovely treat to look forward to!

Looking for make-up tips and the latest great buys for you and your home? Visit vieathome.com.

HOW TO CLAIM YOUR SPECIAL FREE GIFT

It couldn't be easier – all you have to do is go to vieathome.com/eyes. Choose your favourite eyeshadow colour, then enter the promotion code **EYES** at the checkout. Your gift will be despatched straightaway, but please allow up to 14 days for delivery.



Fancy throwing a party?

Hold a VIE at home party and enjoy a night in with your friends. A VIE consultant will be on hand to give you free advice on skincare, plus you can 'play' with all the gorgeous VIE at home make-up. There will be lots of money-saving offers on the night, too. To find out more, go to vieathome.com/host-a-party.

OFFER TERMS & CONDITIONS 1 Offer available until 7 May 2010. 2 Offer can only be redeemed through vieathome.com/eyes and cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. 3 Only one free item per household and one per customer. 4 To claim the discount, use the coupon code 'EYES'. 5 VIE at home has the right to withhold this offer at its discretion. 6 Please allow up to 14 days for delivery. 7 Not available in the Republic of Ireland or overseas.





Aaah...perfect! If only I could reach that fruit without sitting up.



Retreat to your spacious, airy room if you fancy a siesta.



How's this for a spot of colonial glamour – G&T anyone?

WIN! A 7-night luxe holiday to Lanzarote

A week of soaking up the sun could be on your family's agenda this year if you're our lucky winner – so go on, give it a go!

Are you dreaming of a sunny summer hol, chilling out round a pool, drink in hand? Then start dreaming of winning our brilliant prize...

We've teamed up with award-winning travel group Monarch and Seaside Hotels to offer one lucky reader a family holiday in Lanzarote at the beautiful 5-diamond Hotel Seaside Los Jameos Playa in Playa de los Pocillos.

The colonial-style Hotel Seaside Los Jameos is set in lush gardens right opposite the beach at Playa de los Pocillos. With two swimming pools and a Spa and Wellness centre, it's the perfect place to relax – and with the children happily occupied at the Kid's Club, all the family will have a fab time.

YOUR PRIZE INCLUDES

- ◆ Seven nights' accommodation for a family of four at the Hotel Seaside Los Jameos Playa in Playa de los Pocillos.
- ◆ Breakfast and dinner on each day.
- ◆ Return flights with Monarch to Lanzarote from Birmingham, Gatwick, Luton or Manchester airports.



TO ENTER Simply answer the question below then call 0905 652 0765 or text **ESSWIN**, a space, your answer, your name, house number and postcode to 86611. BT calls cost £1 per call. Costs from other networks may be higher. Texts cost £1 per text, plus network charges. When you enter by text, you may in future receive sms marketing messages from IPC and *essentials*; if you don't want to get messages, please end your text with **NO INFO**. SP: Eckoh 0870 880 4869. Or send a postcard with your name, address, phone number to **MRM, essentials/Monarch Lanzarote Competition, PO Box 502, Leicester LE94 0AB** to arrive by 29 April 2010.

Which group of islands does Lanzarote belong to? A Balearic B Archipelago C Canary

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

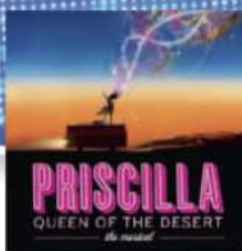
- ◆ Monarch offers a huge range of great value holidays, accommodation options, car hire and travel insurance with a week's half board stay at the Hotel Seaside Los Jameos Playa starting from just £505 per person (based on two sharing and including Monarch flights). Monarch scheduled flights operate year-round to Lanzarote from Birmingham, London Gatwick, London Luton and Manchester airports.
- ◆ To book Monarch flights, Monarch Holidays or Monarch Hotels, please visit monarch.co.uk.
- ◆ For further info about Seaside Hotels, please visit seaside-hotels.com.

monarch.co.uk

TERMS & CONDITIONS Competition opens midnight 1 April and closes midnight 29 April 2010. Normal IPC competition rules apply. Competition details form part of these terms and conditions. The prize is as offered and consists of seven nights' half-board accommodation for a family of four (two adults and two children up to 11 years old) at the 5-diamond Hotel Seaside Los Jameos Playa in Playa de los Pocillos in Lanzarote. Prize to be taken by 30 April 2011 subject to availability at the time of booking, but excludes Christmas, New Year and bank holidays. Winners must confirm full names of those travelling one month prior to travel. Entry is open to residents of the UK, except employees (and their families) of IPC Media, its printers and agents, the suppliers of the prize, and any other companies associated with the competition. The winner must be aged 18 or over. Proof of identity and age may be required. Use of a false name or address will result in disqualification. All entries must be made directly by the person entering the competition. No responsibility can be accepted for entries lost, damaged or delayed in the post. The prize is as stated, and is not transferable to another individual and no cash or other alternatives will be offered. Additional costs such as travel insurance, spending money and airport transfers (in the UK and Lanzarote) are not included in the prize. Flight extras are not included in the prize (flight extras include, but are not limited to, pre-allocated seats and the carriage of hold/checked-in baggage). The promoters reserve the right to amend or alter the terms of competitions. The winner will be chosen from all correct entries received by the closing date. Failure to respond and/or provide an address for delivery, or failure to meet the eligibility requirements may result in forfeiture of the prize. If the winner cannot be contacted, or is unable to comply with these terms and conditions, the promoter reserves the right to offer the prize to the next eligible entrant drawn at random. The decision of the judges is final, based on the criteria set out in the promotion, and no correspondence will be entered into over this decision. Competitions may be modified or withdrawn at any time. The Service Provider and contact details are specified within the promotional material. The winner will be the first correct entry drawn after the closing date 29 April 2010.

WIN! Gorgeous goodies worth £1,000

One reader takes it all!



VIP theatre tickets

You'll get four VIP tickets* to see the smash-hit musical *Priscilla Queen of the Desert* (priscillathemusical.com) at London's Palace Theatre.

Spa break

Courtesy of Spaseekers, the UK's biggest online spa specialist, you and a friend will be off on an indulgent Mini Pamperday at a spa of your choice. The luxurious day includes a back, neck and shoulder massage, a super prescription facial and a manicure or pedicure, as well as lunch and use of the spa facilities. Bliss!



Exclusive designer bag

Designed by Lulu Guinness especially for QVC, this stylish, patent-finish everyday Romilly bag is all you need to turn an okayish outfit into something stunning.



ESSTREAT1 05

For your chance to win these fabulous prizes, turn to page 131 – you can enter by phone, text or postcard.

Terms & conditions * The prize winner will win four VIP tickets to see *Priscilla Queen of the Desert the Musical*. Tickets are valid for Mon-Thurs evening performances only until the 31 June 2010. The prize is subject to availability, non-transferable and cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Travel to and from London is not included. There is no cash alternative.

Organic beauty products

Pamper yourself with organic goodies for your skin, hair and body from Organic Surge. You'll get a whopping 36 gorgeous products, from Blissful Daily Moisturiser to Gentle Meadow Shower Gel – all formulated with natural ingredients.



Lots of wine and chocolate

Time to ditch the diet... a Laithwaites Chocolate Lover's Hamper will be delivered to your door along with a Laithwaites mixed wine and Champagne case that includes a bottle of Laithwaites Premier Cru Champagne. What a treat!



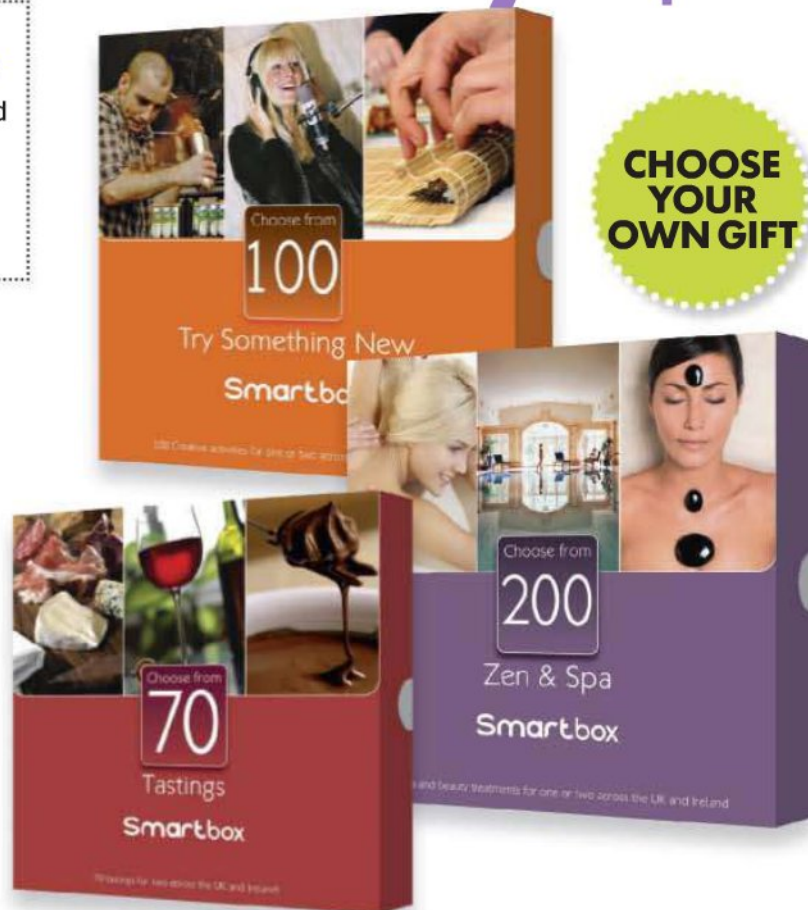
Giveaways just for you

To enter ***ESSTREAT1 01, 02, 03 and 04** by phone, text and post, just turn to page 131 for full details. Lines are open: 1 April to 29 April 2010.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

** The prize is valid until 30 September 2010. It excludes bank holidays and York Races, and it's subject to availability. The offer (based on two sharing a double/twin room) is valid until August 2010, excluding Easter, bank holidays and York Races, and is subject to the availability of allocated rooms.

*** The prize is for two people and is subject to availability. For the offer, a minimum stay of two nights applies at weekends.



**CHOOSE
YOUR
OWN GIFT**

A surprise in a box...

* ESSTREAT1 01

Smartbox™ is a unique concept in gift-giving where you get to pick your very own present from a huge choice of experiences in a themed gift box. There are 11 exclusive Smartbox™ themes available, each offering a set of diverse experiences, from thrill-seeking activities and wine tasting days to pampering beauty treatments and UK mini breaks. Three of you will win a selection of Smartboxes up to the value of £350, including the Try Something New Smartbox™, where you can record your own song or make your own perfume, and the Zen & Spa Smartbox™, which offers a luxurious spa treatment at venues across the country. Smartbox™ is the perfect gift for any occasion, whether it's Mother's Day, Father's Day, a birthday, a gift for a bridesmaid or mother-to-be – or simply a treat for yourself! For more information, go to smartbox.com/uk.

Decadent Yorkshire break

* ESSTREAT1 02

The 4-star Royal York Hotel (principal-hayley.com/venues-and-hotels/the-royal-york-hotel), set in beautiful landscaped gardens with spectacular views of York Minster, features a state-of-the-art health and fitness club and opulent bedrooms – and our lucky winner will be staying there! Your prize** is for you and a guest and includes

two nights' accommodation in a luxurious suite overlooking the gardens and York Minster, a chilled bottle of Champagne in your room on arrival, complimentary chocolates, slippers and bathrobes, full English breakfast each morning and a sumptuous three-course dinner each evening in the chic Tempus Restaurant.

EXCLUSIVE SAVE WITH ESSENTIALS OFFER

**SAVE with
essentials**

We've arranged for *essentials* readers to save 30% on a stay at the Royal York – you'll pay just £64.75 per person for one night's accommodation, full English breakfast, a three-course dinner and a bottle of Champagne. You'll also be able to enjoy facilities including its health and fitness club, swimming pool, sauna, steam room, whirlpool spa and gym. To book, call 01904 653 681 and quote 'essentials'.

Ooh, what luxury – and you've got two nights to play lady of the manor!



Simply call, text or write
and you could be a
winner... good luck!



Cotswold hideaway

* **ESSTREAT1 03**

The Lords of the Manor in the heart of the Cotswolds is set in eight acres of landscaped gardens and parkland – it's a haven of luxury, privacy and relaxation. This fab prize*** includes a two-night stay for the winner and a guest, afternoon tea, dinner and breakfast on both days, plus a pair of tickets for Blenheim Palace.

EXCLUSIVE SAVE WITH ESSENTIALS OFFER

SAVE with essentials Take advantage of this great offer and treat yourself to this break for the special price of £149 per person per night. For more details, visit prideofbritainhotels.com, or call 0800 089 3939 for your free hotel directory.



TV, DVD player & DVDs

* **ESSTREAT1 04**

Grab the popcorn and enjoy compelling thriller *The Box* from the comfort of your sofa this month. Starring Cameron Diaz and James Marsden as a happy couple whose lives get turned upside down when they receive a sinister box from a mysterious stranger, this fast-paced tale of deceit, decisions and moral dilemmas is available to buy on DVD and Blu-ray for £17.99 on 19 April. We have a Sony 32in LCD TV, DVD player and copy of the DVD for our first prizewinner, and copies of the DVD for the nine runners-up.

Prize crossword

It's quick, fun and you could win a
getaway for two, plus spa treatments

WIN!

Our winner will be off on a Yorkshire Break courtesy of citybreaks.org.uk and Cedar Court Hotels (cedarcourthotels.co.uk). Your prize* includes: two nights at the 4-star Cedar Court Hotel Leeds/Bradford for two people, full English breakfast, dinner on one night, use of the leisure facilities, plus a pampering 30-minute spa treatment each. The Cedar Court Hotel is perfectly located near Leeds, Bradford and Brontë countryside, so there's plenty to do – for ideas visit citybreaks.org.uk.

TO ENTER Just call 09055 810 018 or text **ESSWORDB**, a space, the answer to **8 ACROSS**, your name, house number and postcode to **86611**. Lines open 1 April to 29 April 2010.

BT calls cost 25p per min and last about 2 mins. Cost from other networks may vary. Texts cost 50p each, plus network charges. When you enter by text, you may in future get SMS marketing messages from IPC and *essentials*. If you don't want to receive these messages, end your text with No Info. SP: Eckoh, 0870 880 4869.

MARCH PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

ACROSS 7 Utter 8 Potty 9 Bridget 10 Nun
11 Mug up 13 Nippy 15 Low 17 Finland
20 Email 21 Picky

DOWN 1 Bulb 2 String 3 Drag 4 Spot on
5 Stan 6 Sydney 11 Milked 12 Piffle 14 Plaipe
16 Wean 18 Nape 19 Days

You'll find the answers to the crossword in next month's issue of *essentials*.

**FAB CITY
BREAK**



...then relax and chill back at the hotel – what could be better?

citybreaks

Insider Guides to England's cities



You'll have time to enjoy some retail therapy in the Knightsbridge of the North...



ACROSS

- 1 Trucker's compartment (3)
- 3 Surefire winner (4,3)
- 7 Sian ____, TV weather presenter (5)
- 8 Deep opening in the ground (5)
- 9 Barmy! (7)
- 11 ____ Ripley, TV actress (3)
- 12 ____ Max, Mel Gibson film role (3)
- 13 Support, back (7)
- 15 Finger or toe (5)
- 17 Nut's outer covering (5)
- 18 Confined, like an animal (5,2)
- 19 Process (hide into leather) (3)

DOWN

- 1 Showbiz personality (5)
- 2 Grilled or toasted (7)
- 3 ____ Owen, soap actor (3)
- 4 Adjusted (a lens) (7)
- 5 Item of underwear (3)
- 6 Child's word for 'stomach' (5)
- 10 Built, put up (7)
- 11 Embarrassing penalty in a game (7)
- 12 Doctor or trained first aider (5)
- 14 ____ MacArthur, yachting heroine (5)
- 16 One-night performance by a band (3)
- 17 Wickedness (3)

*Prize must be taken before 30 Nov 2010 & is subject to availability. No cash alternative available. Travel to & from the hotel, insurance & any extra activities, other than those stated, are the responsibility of the winner. The winner must be aged 18+. Prize is non-transferable & cannot be used in conjunction with other offers & is not retrospective.

essentials

To advertise call **020 3148 2922**

Accessories

This is what
dropping four dress sizes
feels like.



Is your life on hold because you are overweight?

There's before All About W8 and after All About W8. You will love the difference between them – thousands of others have – so why not join them? Get rid of the tired, fed up 'Before' and experience the full of energy, more confident 'After'.

What we promise:

- ✓ Follow any of the five programmes, and you will lose your weight fast.
- ✓ By using the mind, body and balance tasks, you will adopt new eating habits.
- ✓ Improve your overall health when you shed those excess pounds.

How it works:

- Using a combination of All About W8 Mealpaks and healthy foods generates fast weight loss
- Choose which programme suits you, your lifestyle and current health
- It's really simple, convenient and easy to follow, no matter how busy your lifestyle
- No fuss, no calorie counting, and it does not impact on your life
- Choice of how you want to do it – online with confidential support, or with your local All About W8 Consultant Mentor

Start the new you, your way, today

www.allaboutw8.co.uk

Or call:

0844 544 7773

All About W8
weight loss at its best

For any programme below 800 kcal per day, we will notify your GP. As with all weight loss programmes, we recommend you see your GP prior to starting.



Kerry Crossan

"I lost 5st 8lb"

See my story at:

www.allaboutw8.co.uk

To advertise in **essentials** contacts call **020 3148 2922**

Fashion

Saress® The Ultimate Beach Dress
As seen on GMTV



① ② ③

Say goodbye to the difficult, awkward sarong, The Saress is simple and easy to slip on and uses no knots ties just a loop at 2 corners so you slip The Saress around your back, thread opposite arms through for an easy elegant flattering beach dress in seconds – it's sensational Stunning, cool, comfortable & crease free!

Visit: www.saress.com
01902 750657
Available in 19 designs & 2 lengths 5 Sizes
Ring for brochure

VARCA



One of the new additions for 2010 - The denim blue suede espadrille wedge which accompanies the Traditional Varca sandal great for holidays available all year round. More styles and colours in Nubuck and Leather - also selling other holiday accessories. Visit our shop Wed/Thurs 10am - 3pm call for details 01903 746644. Unit 3 Spring Buildings, Water Lane, Storrington RH20 3DP
www.varca.com

Beauty

Linda Briggs
Skincare and beauty products
Including 28 organic ranges
View the website at www.lindabriggs.co.uk or by telephone
01354 610368.



- ✓ Dentistry
- ✓ Cosmetic Surgery
- ✓ General Surgery

Linda Briggs Ltd
Premium provider of personal cosmetic and surgical advice and services
www.lindabriggs.co.uk

Home Interest

See more clearly

RISK FREE 30 DAY TRIAL



By the age of 60, you will need three times as much light to read as you did in your youth.

THE RIGHT SOLUTION
An Alex Light will bathe your page in a personal pool of high quality light. This means you will be able to read and concentrate for longer, and in more comfort. It reduces the stress placed on your eyes, especially when you read small print. Try one in your own home for 30 days risk free.

"the best thing since printing was invented."
Russell Bryden
Dumfries & Galloway

Serious Readers
Read in More Comfort

Call for a FREE brochure
Quote: 1234
0800 085 1088
www.seriousreaders.com

Makers of fine furniture for generations
Only from us.



Aspen 3 seater sofa
was £1090 - now only £782

Thomas Lloyd - the UK's number one market leader in mail order leather furniture. At Thomas Lloyd you'll find outstanding quality because we compromise on nothing. We only sell direct to you - the public - saving you hundreds of pounds on retail mark-ups. We offer the largest choice in contemporary and traditional models, with a 2 year guarantee covering quality and materials. But that's not all, we give you a 21 day home trial, so live with your furniture or get a full refund. What could be more simple?

For your free colour brochure call
01443 771222
or visit www.thomaslloyd.com

Thomas Lloyd
SINCE 1981
MADE IN UK
ABERGORKI INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, TREORCHY, SOUTH WALES CF42 6DL

100% GENUINE LEATHER

essentials

To advertise call **020 3148 2922**

Health

**Lose a stone
in a month***

ONLINE

with our **new**
**Amazing Inch
Loss Plan**
at **rosemary conley's online
slimming club**



Receive your
free Portion Pots
and Magic Measure
when you join!

www.rosemaryconleyonline.com

* Trialists lost an average of 14lbs in 4 weeks

**£10 off all
memberships****

** When you sign up to any of our membership packages. Quote offer code **ESSENTIALS** at checkout and £10 will be deducted from your membership fee.

STOP THE CLOCK!

If you would like to look
younger and live longer,

please go to

www.youthbloom.com

or call 01600 712496

Clairvoyant

EVE
Clairvoyant/Psychic

I answer all my calls personally.
For a professional, honest and accurate reading. Offering
guidance & clarity in all the important areas of your life.
Credit/Debit cards welcome: **01942 205318**

For entertainment purposes.
245 PO Box 567 Leeds LS2 7VP

Education & Courses

MEDIA FILM TV in London
EXPERIENCE The World's Greatest Place
London Academy of Media Film TV

100 courses to choose from!

* Makeup * Hair * Beauty * TV Presenting * Acting
* Fashion Model * Photography * Public Speaking

WWW.MEDIA-COURSES.COM

0871 566 1631

Literary
chicks



Think You've Got a Book in you?

Online writing courses for today's
newspaper, magazine and book
markets tutored by best selling authors
and top name journalists.
www.literarychicks.com

Clairvoyants

PSYCHIC SIGHT

Carving & Inspiring 1-2-1 Readings with our Elite Psychics

0808 208 9183

Freephone: credit card readings £22.95 for 20 mins

0906 110 7043

Eire 1580 106808

All 0906 calls cost £1.50/min (Eire £2.40) from BT landlines & recorded

Text SEER to 84184

Texts £1.50 per reply

www.psychicsight.com

Live Spiritual and Tarot Readings

kooma

75p
per min

0906 758 0130

Credit Card

0800 075 8721

£14 for 20 mins or £27 for 40 mins

Over 18's. 0906 - 75p per min; network extras apply. Calls recorded.
24hr helpline 0844 944 3044

FAMOUS PSYCHIC AMBER

We Specialise In
Relationships And
Heartbreaking Situations.
Ring For An Honest
Insight Into Your Future.

As Seen In The
Media, Writer
And Radio
Broadcaster.

0800 058 2303

Or Pay By Phone

0906 539 0755

All readings are for your entertainment

Calls cost £1.50 per min

& are recorded

LOAK CMI 6BD

TEXT AMBER TO 78887

Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

Gail Keenan Psychics

Gifted Psychics = Accurate Readings

Credit Card Booking line: **0207 183 1998**

24 Hr. Premium Rate Line: **0906 539 0180**

www.gailkeenan.co.uk

Gail Keenan, Regent Street, London W1

18+ - 0906 - £1.50 per min • £1.50 per min • International

Life Coach

Kind Life -

Life Coach

Make a change in your life
for the New Year with
Elizabeth **Life Coach Image**
Consultant.

Love, Diet, Self-confidence
and Professional Development.

Based in **Harley St**

face-to-face or telephone.

Call **0207 2377 287** or

07545136768

Visit: **www.kind-life.com**

Promotional Discovery

session £30 for 90 min

Applies for all bookings until January 31.

LIVE Tarot Readings & Spiritual Life Coaching

ASK THE ANSWER

Text 'GUIDE' to

82768

Credit Card FREE Phone

0800 030 4977

Calls cost £21 for 30 mins or £39 for 1 hour

With **Anne-Marie**

"My trusted
team of readers
will guide you"

On Your Phone Bill

0906 753 9257

Calls cost 75p/min Live calls recorded

18+ Only. Text Msgs cost £1.50 for each message received, some
messages may be up to two messages long (£3.00). Helpline 0844 561
6410 **www.asktheanswer.com**

Nirvana Light

Naturally Gifted Psychics
specialising in Love and Relationships

CREDIT CARD SERVICE

Freephone **0800 058 2290**

9.00am-1.00am £30 for 20 mins & £43 for 30 mins

PAY ON YOUR PHONE BILL

24hr **0906 111 1905**

1580 444 337 (Eire)

£1.20 per min & 3p per min (incl. VAT)

TEXT SERVICE: Text AMAM or SAM & your question to 66660

Each reply costs £1.50. May be two replies

Box 5265 EC3P 3WY 60p/min All Calls recorded Help 0845-053-0506

LIVE! Psychic Tarot

ONLY 60p

09048 222 233

Box 5265 EC3P 3WY 60p/min All Calls recorded Help 0845-053-0506

Personal

LIVE CHAT

Chat with

FUN Singles!

Women FREE:

0800 856 2929

Men call: **0871 594 0105**

*All 0871 calls cost 10 pence per minute from a BT landline, other networks and mobiles
may cost more. First Media Ltd, PO Box 62424, E14 1FN. 18+ Help: 0871 208 1184

Women FREE:

0808 188 0088

Men call: **0871 208 3838**

100's FUN SINGLES!

LIVE CHAT 0800 082 5454 0207 965 0260

LIVE ADULT CHAT

35p

0983 050 1597

MOBILE 89489

PAY BY CARD & GET FREE MINS 0207 966 2207

1st only. Calls Recorded. 0207 and all charges 09-30p per min from a
BT landline other networks may vary. 09489-£1.50 per min & NO EXTRA
NETWORK CHARGES. CML helpline 0844 999 4489

To advertise in essentials contacts call **020 3148 2922**

Find more magazines at **www.magazinesdownload.com**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY Taurus

21 APR-21 MAY

THIS YEAR is a boom period for creative enterprises. December's events will help you to reach a milestone in your life.

THIS MONTH Whatever the actual events mid-month, they contain a golden opportunity.

Don't be fooled by appearances.

RESPECT PAYS DIVIDENDS Be firm with people and your intentions. Set the standard.

Weekly 0905 817 0439 Monthly 0905 817 0502

AS A TAUREAN YOU ARE

- ◆ Emotionally strong, determined
- ◆ A loyal friend
- ◆ Easy-going and patient
- ◆ Down to earth and practical
- ◆ A little reserved by nature

Gemini

22 MAY-22 JUNE

This month Whether it's just that you're in a spring-cleaning mode or you need a mystery explaining, you've got some clearing up to do. **Recharge the batteries** Time spent nurturing mind, body and spirit will not be wasted.

Weekly 0905 817 0440
Monthly 0905 817 0503

Cancer

23 JUNE-23 JULY

This month Venus brings luck, love and lustre to your life. On or near the 24th, let go and let live. **Be honest** Say what you mean, and if you're perplexed by other people's behaviour, challenge them.

Weekly 0905 817 0441
Monthly 0905 817 0504

Leo

24 JULY-23 AUG

This month Hurray, big plans manage to get off the ground... despite a misunderstanding or a false start mid-month. **My way or the highway** Not a good attitude to have right now. Probably best if you think 'compromise'.

Weekly 0905 817 0442
Monthly 0905 817 0505

Virgo

24 AUG-23 SEPT

This month Travel and making connections is May's starry theme. The 30th is the right time to close a chapter. **Time to get out of your comfort zone** Occasionally you just have to create your own opportunities.

Weekly 0905 817 0443
Monthly 0905 817 0506

Libra

24 SEPT-23 OCT

This month Financial matters are eased by honest discussions. A deal can be set in stone during the week of the 23rd. **Dig deep**, whether you're seeking a financial solution or a romantic answer.

Weekly 0905 817 0444
Monthly 0905 817 0507

Scorpio

24 OCT-22 NOV

This month The new moon of the 14th kicks off an exciting relationship cycle, and it could now be that time to say yes or no... **Learn to listen** It can be very hard, but you'll discover so much more by zipping it!

Weekly 0905 817 0445
Monthly 0905 817 0508

Sagittarius

23 NOV-22 DEC

This month Expect mixed messages this month, especially with regard to work – and act with caution. Clarity is gained after the 21st. **Wait before you take any action** If you're not sure what to do about a matter, do nothing.

Weekly 0905 817 0446
Monthly 0905 817 0509

Capricorn

23 DEC-19 JAN

This month Rifts can be healed and new beginnings can be made. Expect changes and U-turns around the 28th. **Love conquers all** Don't be too proud to accept an apology or extend an olive branch.

Weekly 0905 817 0447
Monthly 0905 817 0510

Aquarius

20 JAN-19 FEB

This month You can realise a dream but, at the same time, you can also make a big mistake. Don't leave anything to chance around the 18th. **Secrets and lies** It's always wise to double check the facts.

Weekly 0905 817 0448
Monthly 0905 817 0511

Pisces

20 FEB-20 MAR

This month After some misunderstandings and delays, you should now be back on the road to success. Choose the 15th for a special date. **Take control** Don't wait for people to come to you; if you've got a gut feeling, act on it.

Weekly 0905 817 0449
Monthly 0905 817 0512

Aries

21 MAR-20 APR

This month March birthdays are in for a surprise, while April birthdays get a second chance. **Preparation is everything** It's a good time to sort yourself out – make a 'to do' list and get organised.

Weekly 0905 817 0438
Monthly 0905 817 0501

2010 YEAR AHEAD

What does 2010 have in store for you?

Call 0906 174 0064 now for a live one-to-one astrology reading with one of our top experts. Or text ESSASTRO followed by a space, your date and time of birth to 86655 eg. ESSASTRO 010181 1530 Will I be lucky in love this year?

essentials APPROVED PSYCHIC PANEL

General guidance

Do you ever wonder what the future holds for you in any area of your life?

Call our expert team of psychics for a personal consultation on **0906 344 8012**

Or text **ESSENTIALS** (space) followed by your question to **86655** eg **ESSENTIALS** Will I ever be able to stop worrying about money matters?

Family guidance

Do you need help in understanding or dealing with a family situation?

Call a family psychic expert for a personal consultation on **0906 638 0164**

Or text **ESSFAM** (space) followed by your question to **86655** eg **ESSFAM** Will our family see eye to eye in the near future?

Weekly starlines are updated every Monday. BT calls to 09058 cost 75p per min and last about 4 mins. Cost from other networks may be higher. SP: Eckoh, 0870 880 4869. BT calls to 0906 cost £1.50 per min. Callers must be 18+. Cost includes a CD of your reading upon request. Lines are open from 7am-2am every day, calls made outside of these hours will be charged. Text readings cost £1.50 inc. VAT. All replies take up to two messages. Standard operator rates apply for all messages you send. Psychics will promptly reply to all messages. When you text a psychic, you will get marketing messages from IPC Media Ltd and essentials magazine. However, you can reply NO at any time to unsubscribe from marketing messages. Helpline: UK 0800 140 9049. Service provider: Pronto Media Ltd, PO Box 266, Chipping Norton OX7 9DJ. All calls are recorded. Readings are for entertainment purposes only. This service is regulated by PhonepayPlus.

MY LIFE'S LITTLE ESSENTIALS

Gina McKee

Award-winning actress Gina, 45, has had a string of film hits, from *Notting Hill* to *In the Loop*. Her breakthrough came in the 1996 drama *Our Friends in the North* for which she won a BAFTA. Since then she's been in *The Forsyte Saga* and the BBC's *Fiona's Story*. She lives in Sussex with husband Kez Cary.

Chocolate... every day!

I'm addicted to it and feel as if something is freakily wrong in the world if I don't eat it every day. In fact, my life would be much improved if there were chocolate vending machines on every street corner.



Blusher — I can't do without it!

I'm too pale to go without make-up. If I don't wear blusher I'll sometimes catch my reflection in a mirror and think, 'Crikey, I need some help.'

Handbags make me happy

I'm not a girly girl, but there's something about a wonderful bag that keeps me cheery. My favourite is a designer one and it's sparkly, but not blingy. I squash everything in — scripts, money, keys, iPod, an inhaler (I'm allergic to cats). I carry Sudoku puzzles, too — but get grumpy if I can't complete them!



Camomile tea is a must-have

I discovered it through detox dieting many years ago — something I don't have the motivation to do now! But after giving up dairy products for several weeks, milk tasted weird to me when I went back to it.

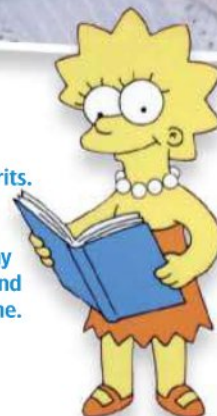


Looking for a good deal

I've always been careful with money because, as an actor, I can never predict my annual salary. So, before I buy anything, I always do research online to make sure I get the best price. In fact, that's what I'm doing now before our car's next serviced!

Unwinding to *The Simpsons*

It's how I relax and it always lifts my spirits. I adore Lisa — she grounds the show and gives me hope. Lisa for President! I also love *Antiques Roadshow* on Sunday evenings. I've watched the Australian and US versions and they're just not the same.



I'm in awe of Judi Dench.

She could read out her shopping list and I'd be entertained. I see everything she does and she's a constant inspiration.



Fascination for making jewellery

I've been beading for quite a long time — I buy semi-precious stones to make bracelets and necklaces and other pieces. I think it'd be great to be able to make the silver catches too, so I'd like to take a course in silversmithing. I love it as it's so far removed from acting and I can lose myself for hours creating something.



Dancing around the living room

If I'm feeling low, I'll put on classic disco. I love Sister Sledge, and Chic's *Le Freak* was the first record I ever bought — it's got a great beat. I dance around the living room until I'm exhausted. Works every time.

Walking on the Sussex Downs

A long bracing walk there gives me some head space where I can people-watch, think, and get some exercise — it stops me getting twitchy, too.



◆ Gina plays the mum of a deaf girl who witnesses a murder in *The Silence*, a new don't-miss-it, four-part thriller starting on BBC1 in May.



***It not only tastes good,
it does good.***

*Galaxy® has joined forces with the Rainforest Alliance
to help support cocoa growing communities in Africa.
So don't be surprised to see a little frog on it.*

mars.co.uk/rainforestalliance

FULL BODY PROTECTION

Fine limp hair is up to 20% thinner¹, so already vulnerable to styling damage. Pantene's Volume & Body system gives your hair the body you want with the protection it needs – up to **60% more volume**² with up to **60% less damage**³. Volume without compromise. Find more Pantene hair facts and tips at www.pantene.com

The science behind healthy-looking hair. PANTENE PRO-V.




PANTENE
PRO-V

¹ than thick hair
² compared to unwashed hair
³ due to combing or styling, shampoo and conditioner vs. non-conditioning shampoo